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THE TOWNS OF FONTARABIA AND HENDAYE ON THE RIVER BIDASSOA.

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THE PYRENEES

WITH

EXCURSIONS INTO SPAIN

BY

LADY CHATTERTON,

AUTHOR OF
"RAMBLES IN THE SOUTH OF IRELAND," "HOME SKETCHES,"
ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE PYRENEES

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CHAPTER I.

Arrival at Montreuil—Historical Recollections of Abbeville—The Battle of Crecy—Thoughts on the advantages of experience and old age.

Friday, May 1.—*Montreuil, Hôtel de l'Europe.*—We crossed over from Dover to Boulogne this morning, and afterwards enjoyed the drive here extremely. We were much amused at the change of scene, the cheerful aspect of the towns in this country; and the contrast between France and England seemed as striking as if we had never been abroad before, yet this is the ninth time I have crossed the Channel!

Then we had a lovely moonlight walk round the ramparts, and were surprised at the deserted look of the town. So few lights were twinkling

in the windows, and there was so little movement or noise in the streets, we could not imagine what had become of the gay population we had seen on our arrival.

The only thing that stirred seemed to be a pension de jeunes demoiselles, who were walking two and two, followed by some Black Nuns. We saw them enter the gateway of a large gloomy house, in which, like most of the others, there were no lights visible through the open windows.

I delight in the cheerful aspect of French inns, and their pretty light beds, which I always think give pleasant dreams; and here, too, are some venerable tapestry chairs, which look as if they had been embroidered by Marie Antoinette's maids of honour.

Abbeville Hôtel de l'Europe, Saturday.—A hot but pleasant drive of four hours and a half, brought us here at three o'clock, and we have got all our comforts out, and established ourselves, till Monday, in a very pretty apartment looking on the garden.

To an invalid, almost the entire pleasure of travelling depends upon the look of the rooms, and the view from them, whether it be cheerful

or otherwise; and therefore I think a little tour in those countries which have good inns, must be of great use to the spirits, if not to the health of sufferers. In England the hotels are by no means so cheerful or amusing, nor in my opinion, half so comfortable, or the food half so good, as abroad.

The scenery is rather pretty about Nouvion—the last post before we reached Abbeville. It was a place often visited by Louis XI.; and there, the combination of light and shade along the avenue, a few peasants' carts, the steeple of a village church, and a group of rough, high-roofed cottages formed an interesting picture. Then, on our left, was the Forest of Crecy, whose fine beech trees are now in the full glory of their spring costume, and whose very name conjured up visions of valour and victory, and recalled pleasantly to mind the monument we saw only the day before yesterday at Canterbury Cathedral of the young hero of Crecy, whose touching epitaph in Norman-French (written by himself,) we tried to decipher; and about three leagues on our right was St. Valery, the place from which William the Norman embarked to conquer England.

There is still a tower in the place called La Tour d'Harold, into which Harold was thrown by Gui, Count of Ponthieu, when that unfortunate prince was obliged, by a storm, to land at St. Valery; and this scene is represented in the famous Bayeux tapestry. Harold was, however, liberated by William of Normandy. He returned to England, and, as we all know, on the death of Edward the Confessor, caused himself to be proclaimed King. This exasperated William of Normandy, who then collected his troops, and embarked from St. Valery to invade England, assisted by its Seigneur, and the Count Gui de Ponthieu.

We could not see the spot, but its vicinity made us imagine a race of still more bold and hardy warriors than those of our third Edward, traversing the old woods of Crecy: and I thought of the ambitious dreams in which some of those old Normans may have indulged—dreams which, indeed, have not only been realized, but seem to survive in the minds of their numerous descendants, who still bear, and still do honour to their names. Eight hundred years! — It is a glorious period — even in itself sublime; for, as Kant says, " eine lange

dauer ist erhaben;" and when the same name, accompanied by the same noble spirit, is handed down through so long a period, there is something extremely interesting in its contemplation. But my scribbling will not become sublime, I fear, by being long, so I will merely add that, at Bernay, the post about half way between Montreuil and this place—there is a very good inn; and this, to us degenerate travellers, is more to the purpose than all the conquests and glory of St. Valery and Crecy.

Evening.—We have been much surprised at the extreme beauty of the church here. The façade and two towers over the entrance are very highly ornamented—irregular, but magnificent. The exteriors of Gothic churches abroad always appear more rich than those of our own cathedrals, because the statues still remain in their niches: but the interior is seldom so highly ornamented, and the filthy pavement, and all the gilt gingerbread-looking ornaments of Roman-catholic shrines, have a tawdry appearance, which is always disappointing. Our cathedrals, too, are now restored, and so beautifully kept, that I fear we shall be more than ever disgusted with the interiors of the churches abroad.

We had afterwards a damp exploring walk through the town. We went round part of the ramparts, and saw a splendid sunset—lost our way, and made a great detour, which tired me extremely; but I am now enjoying this pretty room (with its comfortable red velvet chairs and Louis XIV. furniture and decorations), and the moon is shining brightly through the two open windows which look on the garden, and the heavy thunder-shower has given a fresher smell to the lilacs and other sweet flowers which bloom there, and the soft summer lightning is gleaming in the horizon—now and then, bringing vividly to view the dark outlines of gable-ends and pinnacles; at other moments, shining through the branches of the trees and illuminating the garden.

There are many interesting historical recollections connected with Abbeville, and I have been reading of several remarkable things which happened here in early times. Abbeville was the chief town of Ponthieu—at least, after the year 990—when it was surrounded with walls by Hugues Capet, for before that period Montreuil was the chief residence of the counts. Count Gui of Ponthieu fought at the battle of Hast-

ings, and afterwards, with Philip I. of France, against Flanders,—as Louandre says, in his interesting History, — " Et reçu de ce prince l'odieux mission de plonger dans un cachot la Princesse Berthe, qu'il avait repudiée pour epouser Bertrade. Renfermée à Montreuil-sur-Mer, dans une tour qui subsiste encore dans la citadelle, et qui parte son nom, la reine infortunée y mourut de chagrin et de misère, vers 1095." Count Gui died in 1101 : his daughter and heiress, Agnes, married Robert (called Le Diable) Count of Bellesme Alençon, who treated her cruelly, kept her a prisoner in his Castle of Bellesme, tried to poison her, and she at last took refuge at Abbeville, where she died, in 1120, at a house near the Porte Comtesse, and which belonged since to the Knights Templars.

Adele, the beautiful daughter of Count Jean, of Ponthieu, who lived in 1190, was married to Thomas de St. Valery ; and having been maltreated by some brigands into whose power she fell, her father caused her to be thrown into the sea, thinking thus to efface " l'affront fait à son sang." This subject has been chosen for several tragedies and novels. Her brother Guillaume married, in 1196, Alix, sister to Philippe Au-

guste, who had been affianced to our Richard Cœur de Lion, but the marriage was prevented by the infamous conduct of his father Henry II. The great-grand-daughter of the Count Guillaume, of Ponthieu,* was the celebrated Eleanor, wife of Edward I., who shewed his affection for her memory by the erection of those beautiful crosses at Northampton and other places. Edward did homage at Amiens to the French king for the Comté. He often came here; and fortified his castle near La Porte St. Gilles, on the Paris road, and embellished it with gardens, in 1282. He also obtained permission of Philippe le Hardi to coin money here.

Ponthieu then passed to England, and Edward II. came to do homage here, and married Isabella, daughter of Philippe le Bel. The vicissitudes of her life are well known. After various efforts she at last succeeded, with the assistance of Holland, in placing her son Edward III. on our throne. On her imprisonment in Castle Rising, for misconduct, the revenues

* His only daughter was Marie, whose eldest daughter, Jeanne, married Ferdinand III., of Castille and Leon, in 1237, and her daughter Eleanor afterwards married our Edward I.

of Ponthieu were assigned for her support. Our great Edward III., indignant at being obliged to do homage for Ponthieu, went to war with Philippe de Valois, and assumed a right to the crown of France for his mother.

Louandre gives a very interesting description of the battle of Crecy. Edward said, after having in vain attempted to enter Abbeville (which had been seized by Philip), " Je suis ici sur mes terres, et je veux les defendre." He chose an excellent position for the encampment of his army, and, on the evening before " the engagement, retired to his oratory, and prayed to God that, if he should combat his enemies on the morrow, he might come off with honour. The next day, he and the Prince of Wales heard mass, and communicated. The greater part of the army did the same, confessed, and made proper preparations."*

He (Louandre) attributes the defeat of the French, in some measure, to the impetuosity of the Duc d'Alençon, who commanded the men-at-arms. The king had given orders for the army to halt, in order to allow a little time for rest after a fatiguing march, before commencing

* Froissart.

the attack. This order the Duke disregarded, and advanced with his division ; others were induced to press forward, under the supposition, when they saw the Duke's movement, that the King's order had been countermanded, and thus the army reached the ground in the greatest disorder.

The Genoese archers, in the pay of France, began the attack about three o'clock, in the Valley of Troyelles. There had been a great storm of rain, and, according to Froissart, " a very terrible eclipse of the sun," which afterwards shone out brilliantly full in the faces of the French, thus blinding the Genoese, while the English archers had it in their backs. Besides this, the bowstrings of the Genoese were relaxed by the rain, whilst the bows of the English, having been kept in their cases during the storm, were in good condition. The Genoese were thus unable to advance. The Duc d'Alençon, exasperated by this check, led his troops forward through the broken ranks of his own friends, exclaiming, " Tuez-moi cette canaille-là !" Thus, numbers of them were trampled to death, and the whole line thrown into inextricable confusion. When Philip rode up with

the reserve, in full expectation of victory, great was his horror to find the battle nearly lost. He made a gallant attempt to restore the fortune of the day, and had a horse killed under him; and it was only late in the evening, after his followers were reduced to not more than sixty men, that he suffered himself to be led off from the field. He at first took refuge in the Castle of La Broie, and from thence fled to Amiens.

The loss of the French was enormous,—almost incredible, when compared with the small force of the English army and its trifling loss. The brave but rash D'Alençon, the brother of the King of France, was among the slain; as was the King of Bohemia, whose heroic conduct was so conspicuous. He had lost his sight by means, it was said, of poison, in the Italian wars; yet, blind as he was, he requested that he might be led "so far into the engagement that he might strike one stroke with his sword." His wish was gratified, and the reins of his horse were attached to those of two of his knights. Their bodies were found together the morning after the battle, and it was his plume and motto, "Ich dien," which have furnished to our princes of Wales so interesting a memorial of this day's

victory. The King of Bohemia was buried in the Abbaye des Valoires, with this inscription :—

" L'an mil quarente six trois cents,
Comme la chronique tesmoigne,
Fut apporté et mis ceans,
Jean Luxembourg, Roi de Behaigne."

The conduct of the young Prince of Wales was admirable. The division which he commanded bore the brunt of the attack, and he was at one time in considerable danger from the impetuosity and numbers of his assailants. In this extremity, Sir Thomas Norwich was despatched by the Earl of Warwick to the King, to ask for reinforcements. " No," replied Edward, " let the boy win his spurs. I am determined, if it please God, that all the glory and honour of this day shall be given to him, and to those into whose care I have entrusted him."

There are some lines by an old poet, Jean Douchet, who in an epitaph on Philippe de Valois, wishes to shew that the defeat of the French is to be attributed to their dress:

" Puis a Crécy perdis mes gindarmes
Trente cinque mille nonobstant leurs grands armes,
Par le moyen de leurs acoustremens,
Et chaperons et autres vestemens,
Lesquels flottoient de toutes parts en terre,
Qui n'estoient bons pour gens de bien de guerre."

Philip's son, the unfortunate King Jean, was afterwards taken prisoner by our Black Prince, at the battle of Poitiers, and remained several years in London, till he at last signed the treaty of Bretigny, which restored Ponthieu to England, to the great despair of the inhabitants of Abbeville, who hated the English. Ringois, a rich citizen of this place, was taken to Dover Castle, and put to death by drowning, because he would not acknowledge the English dominion; and this event, too, has been made the subject of a tragedy. Soon afterwards, it came into the possession of the French, remained with them ever after, and the last Count of Ponthieu was poor Charles X., who retained that title after he lost his throne.

In old times the inhabitants of Abbeville seem to have had great taste for music and poetry, and there were "jeux floraux and combats of verse in the adjoining woods," at a place still called Fosse aux Ballades.

In 1463, Louis XI. arrived at Abbeville to repurchase the county of Ponthieu from Charles le Bon, Duke of Burgundy; but it fell again under the dominion of Burgundy, as Charles the Bold made his entry here in 1466. He, however, dying without issue, Ponthieu reverted to France,

and Charles VIII. came to Abbeville on the 17th June, 1493.

Louis XII. was married here in 1514, to Mary of England, sister to Henry VIII., and the ceremony was solemnized with great splendour. The Princess entered the town on horseback, "moult triomphalement," by la Porte Merende, (the one through which we came yesterday from Montreuil.) She rode under a dais of white satin; it was embroidered with roses and porcupines, (the device of King Louis,) and adorned with a fringe of red gold, and supported by silver batons, ornamented with leaves of pure gold. "Sa coiffure," says the old chronicle, "à la façon de son pays, etait enrichie de pierres precieuses à l'entour de ses templettes," and divers "beaux mystères et honnestes" were represented. Many cart-loads of filth were removed on the occasion from the streets, which were usually so dirty as to render boots or stilts indispensable. They were married at the Hotel Grutuze, an old house nearly opposite the church. It is now a magazin de sel; but we fancied, before we knew its name, that it must possess some historical interest, from its quaint and venerable appearance.

There existed some curious old customs in

Abbeville: a man condemned to be hung, might be saved if a woman offered, of her own accord, to marry him. This piece of good fortune happened to a robber at Hautvilliers in 1400; but the girl was lame, and he actually refused her, saying to the hangman, "Alle cloque, je n'en veux mie, attaqu' me;"—"She limps—I do not at all like her for a wife; tie me up."

It seems the echevins (sheriffs) and the mayor had all the authority in their own hands; but they were guided in their decisions by custom. Animals were sometimes executed: thus in 1413, a pig which had mutilated, or, as the old chronicle says, "murdry" a child, was dragged by the hind legs to the place of execution, and hung by the legs till he died. Sometimes animals thus condemned, were executed, dressed in men's clothes.

Plays taken from Scripture subjects were often represented. "The Passion" was played in 1451; and, in 1452, "Les jeux de la vie de *Monsieur* St. Quentin;" in 1493, those of *Monsieur* St. Roch.

Sunday Evening.—There was a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning last night—very awful: it lighted up my pretty Louis Quatorze bed-room in the most brilliant, but livid manner.

The outer Venetian blinds were closed, but the blue flames seemed actually to dance about the room, and were reflected in ghastly attitudes by the numerous looking-glasses, highly polished floor, and secretaire. I drew round the blue silk bed-curtains, and tried to go to sleep, by impressing on my mind that silk is a non-conductor of electricity, but it would not do.

We have had such a pleasant day ; I shall be quite sorry to leave this delightful hotel, and our pretty red sitting-room, and blue bed-room, and the slippery stairs, and airy passage ; the smiling waiter and good-humoured maid, and the dear old landlady, who wears the same cap, and looks exactly as she did sixteen years ago, when I first came here—not a day older.

The nice dinners, too, with all the varieties of petits plats, we both enjoy so much ; the old tea-kettle, with its enormous handle, which is sure to be hotter than the water it contains, and the soft rich carpet, with its vivid flowered pattern, which puts me pleasantly in mind of one worked by Miss P——, two hundred years ago, in my bedroom at poor dear old K——; so does the elaborately carved pedestal to a marble-slab, and the ornamented frame of a looking-glass in

my bedroom. It is strange that we have had a period of very ugly furniture since then, which France seems to have escaped. Why was this?

It is certainly delightful to travel for amusement; and I fear many of us who have the power of doing as we like, do not value this privilege as we ought. I mean that many people, instead of enjoying the independence they possess, long for some place or position in the world, which, however honourable it may be, must necessarily prevent them from going where they wish. Perhaps it is wisely ordained that such should be the case; ambition and vanity, though sad torments to those who possess them, have nevertheless their uses, and keep the world in a state of activity, which, in our degenerated condition, is necessary for its well being. They act like a high wind, and assist to blow away the pestilential influence of sloth and indifference.

Well, be that as it may, I am right glad we have the entire disposal of ourselves, and have the whole world before us; and, what is better still, the whole summer—and even the spring. And this is a piece of good fortune that rarely occurs to those who, like us, have London, and all its pleasant world, for our dear home.

We have left it while the delicious long days are still lengthening, and are but too happy that we have neither parliament nor place to compel us to remain. We are happy, too, in possessing unprejudiced feelings and independent views, which are great sources of enjoyment. We look on the world as it is, and value all the various grades of our fellow-creatures according to their real merit, rather than by their supposed value in the world's eye.

Strange to say, I look forward with more bounding pleasure to this tour than I did when, at blooming fifteen, I set out on my first visit to France ; yet my health is not nearly so good as it was then, nor had I lost some of those dear friends whom I thought it impossible to survive. This wonderful improvement in cheerfulness as I have grown old should be a great encouragement to those who suffer from low spirits, and is chiefly to be attributed to the religious feelings I have attained. At fifteen I had no settled opinions on religion, and I trace my gradual improvement in happiness to the hope I have, by degrees, attained of enjoying eternal bliss in another world. The pleasure, too, that we derive from experience and the cultivation of our tastes,

increases as we grow old, and more than compensates for the buoyant animal spirits which generally belong to youth. This is particularly the case in the enjoyment of fine scenery, or rather in the simple contemplation of nature. The country between London and Andover always appeared to me extremely ugly before I had visited many beautiful scenes in other countries.

On returning home, I expected to be impressed more than ever by its want of beauty, and was therefore much surprised on travelling through it, to find myself admiring several parts extremely; no spot appeared to me uninteresting. Here there was a new pleasure, a power to find beauty in that which had before appeared so plain; and this new faculty I attribute to the intense enjoyment I had experienced in contemplating nature in its loveliest forms.

As a child, I used to long for beautiful scenery, and felt convinced I should be happier if I lived in a pretty country; and such I found to be the case—not only when in the midst of beauty, but afterwards also. The recollection of my enjoyment seemed to give me the power of finding most unexpected charms in the plain aspect of my native dells.

This longing to live amid fine scenery, which I cannot help thinking innate,—for, in my case, it was not caused by any outward impression,—proves to me that we are destined for a more perfect state, our aspirations being always after something more perfect than this world can afford. I have never yet beheld in reality scenes of such loveliness as I sometimes see in my dreams, nor heard music so exquisite as the strains which sometimes bless my slumbers.

CHAPTER II.

Journey to Compiegne—Comparison between the taste in furniture of Louis XIV. and Napoleon—Jeanne d'Arc—Arrival at Paris.

Paris, Wednesday.—We left Abbeville at seven on Monday morning,—passed through Picquigny, —where Louis XI. had an interview with Edward IV. on the bridge, and where the ruins of the old castle, celebrated by Madame Sevigné, above the town, is a fine object. We arrived at Amiens about half-past eleven, and were much pleased with the cathedral. It seems to have been finished in the manner intended when begun, which is not often the case with such a long and elaborate work as a highly decorated Gothic church.

It is in the form of a simple cross. The

entrance front, and indeed the whole exterior, is quite beautiful; over the centre entrance-door are colossal figures of the twelve apostles and other saints, very well carved; on the outside of the choir are some curious old coloured groups of carved figures. There was a dreadful massacre in the cathedral at the time of the Reformation, and the stones of the pavement are crossed in consequence. At the western end are fine recumbent figures, in brass, of the founders of the church, which narrowly escaped being used for cannon balls during the wars. "It was a pity they were not," said one of our party, "because they would have then been *canonized.*"

There is a spire over the centre of the transept, like those in some of our English cathedrals, which is very beautiful, but I thought it much too small for the size of the church, at least it appeared so to us, who have so lately seen and admired Salisbury's gigantic steeple. Much pleased with the town of Amiens. The houses in the older streets and in the place are very picturesque. We passed two pleasant, but fatiguing hours there, and reached Compiegne at half-past seven.

The view as we descended towards Compiegne

was very fine: the town, with its old towers and steeples, was below us, on the left the huge Palace, skirted by gardens and fine woods, its extensive park and forest covering the undulating heights around: the broad river Oise, passing through the town and then winding among green meadows to the right, reflected the brilliant colours of a sunset-sky, and gave animation to the whole scene.

We went, next morning, at eight, to see the palace. The original building was erected by the early kings. The palace was rebuilt by Louis XIV., and restored, after the sufferings of the Revolution, by Napoleon. The last time he was there was in 1811. It again suffered in the war of 1814, but is now in perfect order, and very magnificent. Many rooms are decorated with beautiful Beauvais and Goblin tapestry, and we admired it much more than the harsh, exaggerated paintings which cover the walls and ceilings of others. In the fine ball-room there are twenty-five long benches covered with tapestry, and each of them cost (according to our cicerone) £150!

I do not like Napoleon's taste in the furniture and decorations of his palaces. It has a tawdry

and upstart appearance, shews an affected imitation of the Roman, and has none of that genuine grace and natural or hereditary royal splendour of Louis XIV.'s style. Napoleon's is too full of the emblems of conquest, it speaks of newly-acquired power, and is oppressed with massive and tasteless gilding, which seems the outpouring of unexpected wealth.

It has perhaps more imposing magnificence, but does not inspire half such pleasant feelings, as the luxurious beauty of the old Bourbon style. In fact, the character of an age, or of the person who rules the taste of an age, is seen in nothing more plainly than in its effect on the arts.

The painted ceilings &c. of Napoleon's time are full of battle scenes; in all the decorations we see helmets and instruments of warfare, or tokens of conquest, and even the silken hangings of the walls are often supported by bayonets. The figures are harsh and stiff, shewing, indeed, the youthful vigour of minds just emerged from that temporary barbarism which overspread France at the Revolution; whereas the decorations of the old Bourbons are full of pleasant images of repose. The graceful shepherdesses, and exquisitely-carved Cupids and

Venuses, are the result of many centuries of internal repose and civilization; perhaps, indeed, their effeminacy and voluptuousness shew a state of over civilization, and consequent decadence.

Yet, though the apartments of Compiegne want the ease and grace of hereditary taste, one cannot but regard them with great interest, as the memorials of a man who exercised so extraordinary an influence over the age in which he lived.

It may seem strange, but so it is, that bad characters generally obtain more influence than the good. This is explained by the superior vigour with which bad actions are generally performed, and decision of action makes even vice attractive. Crimes are committed, ambition, envy, malice, &c. are indulged in, and their views carried out with the energy and vigorous impulse of the whole heart; whereas, lukewarmness and indecision too often characterize virtuous actions; besides, it requires an effort to subdue those bad feelings we all inherit with our fallen state, and this effort gives a restraint to the character by no means attractive.

It is seldom that persons not naturally good, however virtuous they may have become, obtain

much influence by their goodness, though in reality they have more merit than those who are good without much effort. Our natural qualities alone give influence, because, as I have said above, all that springs from them is vigorous and attractive, and unfortunately they are more inclined to vice than to virtue.

In the evening, we walked round the town, and went to the bridge.

It was at the siege of Compiegne that Joan of Arc was taken prisoner, when heading a sally from its old walls, and the spot where the sad event occurred is still shewn.

After our own Mary Queen of Scots, there is no female character in history that has inspired so much interest, or received so many poetical tributes as Jeanne d'Arc. The last tribute contains more poetry than any written homage she has received, for though silent, it speaks more powerfully to beholders of all nations and languages, and though fixed and immovable, it seems to breathe the very living spirit of immortality. The immortality of thought, genius, and Christian devotion. All this is clearly stamped on that exquisite statue, moulded by Mary of Orleans, to the memory of France's

fairest heroine and to her own undying fame. Mrs. Hemans could never have seen it, yet her words seem to embody its loveliness :—

" A still, clear face,
Youthful, but brightly solemn ! Woman's cheek
And brow were there, in deep devotion meek,
Yet glorified with inspiration's trace
On its pure paleness.
That slight form !
Was that the leader through the battle-storm ?
Had the soft light in that adoring eye,
Guided the warrior when the swords flashed high ?
'Twas so, even so ! and thou, the shepherd's child,
Joanne, the lowly dreamer of the wild !"

The statue expresses the heroine's feelings even more eloquently than Schiller's words :—

" So ist des Geistes Ruf an mich ergangen,
Mich treibt nicht eitles, irdisches Verlangen."

The drive out of Compiegne for several miles was through the forest, and the smells delicious. We admired the view of the town of Senlis, with its beautiful church and airy spire, and other old towers and buildings: also the fine prospect we had looking back towards Compiegne, from a high hill, up which we wound slowly after we left Villeneuve.

We arrived here, (Paris,) about five o'clock,

and had a great hunt for rooms—the place so full, scarcely any to be had. During the search, my little dog, Frisk, and I, sat waiting in the carriage, and the maid in the rumble behind, whilst the post-boys stood leaning against the railing of the Tuileries' gardens: thus we passed two hours, much to the edification and admiration of passers by. At last, we established ourselves comfortably at Hôtel Wagram, au troisième. The situation very noisy, but the view splendid, over the Tuileries' gardens—smelling so sweet!

And now I am enjoying the moonlit view from our windows, and the delicious smell of orange and lime blossoms from the Tuileries, and the pleasant repose of a comfortable sofa and dressing gown; and this enjoyment is rendered still more intense by feeling that I am not at Colonel T——'s splendid party to which we were invited to-night. Had a delightful walk this evening in the Tuileries, and sat down on the western terrace, overlooking the Place Louis XV., with its obelisk and fountains, (which were in full play,) and the Champs Elysées, as far as the splendid Arc de Triomphe. The prospect there on all sides is very grand, and, animated by the gay

evening population of Paris, and the brilliant colouring of a fine sunset, was particularly beautiful and striking.

Friday.—The ball at Colonel T——'s was very splendid, and W. was much amused by the enormous bouquets and profusion of natural flowers worn by the ladies. The weather is so delicious one does not know how to enjoy it enough. This morning we went to the Louvre, and saw the new splendid collection of Spanish pictures. We thought some by Zurbaran very fine.

Lady I—— de C—— most kindly shewed me some casts of the Princess Marie's models. We admired particularly a figure of Jeanne d'Arc, on horseback; she is represented riding through a field of battle after an action, and contemplates the dead body of a warrior lying at her horse's feet; her countenance is finely expressive of grief.

The Princess Marie did not begin to model until two years before her death. Had she lived, what fame that wonderful genius would have acquired! It seems a great pity such a perfect creature should have been cut off, and yet perhaps the interesting Princess has attained a greater degree of happiness in heaven than if

she had lived to receive more incense from an admiring world.

I often think that success is given by God not so much according to our deserts, as according to what we can bear, or may require for the good of our minds. Persons of genius who do not attain great celebrity during their lives, are perhaps those who would be too much elated by it. Scott had a mind which could not be spoiled by praise. I think, too, we are more depressed by ill success than we are by the consciousness of inability ; and characters differ from each other in nothing more than their requirement of encouragement, or the contrary. I am so dreadfully and fatally sensitive to the encouraging or discouraging opinion of others, that I often actually *become* what they think me. It is in the fatal power of the opinion of others to make me clever or stupid.

After the above sage observation, I found the following sentence in dear M——'s handwriting : —" A very good subject—do descant on it, and warn people against it, for I am afraid many persons are too apt to discourage, rather than encourage others, which is so dreadfully dangerous. Do say a great deal about it in your own wise way."

No, dear M——, I will not say any more; for, in the first place, I hope and trust there are not many people in the world so foolishly sensitive as I am to encouragement or the contrary; and, therefore, but very few would understand the feeling. In the next place, my "way" which you are pleased to call "wise," is not always so, or I should long since have got rid of the above uncomfortable quality.

Saturday, May 8.—Nôtre Dame, which we visited to-day, though very beautiful, struck us as being less fine and grand than the cathedral of Amiens. The exterior of the Madelaine is splendid, but I thought less beautiful than the last time I saw it, (four years ago,) from the joints in the columns being so much more apparent now than formerly. I was disappointed, too, in the size of the interior: it appears so much smaller than the magnificence of the exterior would lead one to expect. Admired some pictures at the Luxembourg more than I did during my last visit. It does not contain any of the best works of Delaroche; his death of Queen Elizabeth looks harsh; and I did not much admire his picture of Edward V. and Duke of York, nor that of Joash, saved by his

Aunt Athaliah—neither of them seemed in his best manner. I was very much pleased with a picture of H. Vernet's. It represents Michael Angelo in the Vatican, meeting Raphael surrounded by his scholars.—" You move about," said M. Angelo, " attended by a numerous suite, like a general." " And you," replied Raphael, " you go alone, like an executioner." The picture tells this anecdote well; but I think the expression with which the reply is given, is more contemptuous than Raphael's features could ever have assumed. Among many good figures and groups in this picture, there is one of a Roman peasant with a child asleep on her knee, which is quite lovely, evidently from nature. Vernet's Judith and Holophernes is fine, but she looks rather too like a Parisian beauty, with her hair dressed by the best coiffeur.

I admired Monvoisin's picture of the Death of Philip, Archduke of Austria. The consequent madness of his wife, the unfortunate Jeanne of Castille, is well expressed, and contrasts strongly with the indifference which their son manifests on the occasion;—that son was afterwards the celebrated Charles V.

To-day,(Tuesday,) passed some crowded hours

in the Louvre, trying to look at 2,280 modern pictures, and nearly a quarter of a mile of the ancient ones. Most of the best—indeed, the whole upper end of the long gallery—we found open, at least to strangers with a passport. So we lingered with great joy over our old friends, the Correggios—The Marriage of St. Catherine, and his Jupiter and Antiope, which came from Charles the First's collection at Richmond, with Titian's interesting picture of the Disciples at Emmaus.

Among the modern we liked some large French historical pictures by Alaux. The Duke of Orleans receiving hospitality under a tent of Laplanders in 1795, by Biard; and some rather exaggerated ones of Northern fishing among icebergs, by the same. The Interior of the Cathedral at Pisa, by Cibot, representing Galileo at eighteen, when he discovered the movement of a pendulum from observing the swinging of a lamp after it was lighted. He applied it to clocks many years afterwards; and this circumstance, like Newton's discovery of gravitation by the fall of an apple, is a proof of the advantage of not being absorbed in one thing—in fact, the use of inattention.

Peasants waiting for the arrival of a Ship, by Delacroix, very good. Portrait of La Duchesse de D——, by Dubufe, we admired, and some others by him ; also the Abdication of Charles V. (a very large picture,) by Gallait.

These and many others we liked extremely : I think the French are very superior to us in their choice of interesting historical subjects, and also in the power of painting large pictures. But some particularly pink Eves and naked goddesses are very bad, and their Holy Families and Saints are not much better. With much of the power to execute, they seem to want the sentiment of religion which produced the fine scriptural pictures of the old masters.

Found le Comte de V—— when I went home : he paid me a long visit—was very agreeable, and more gentlemanlike than any Frenchman I ever saw. Handsome, too, and fair, and very refined, without any affectation, but an amiable wish to please ; in fact, I think he is very like Cinq Mars, as described by himself, and that is saying everything for him.

He spoke of the scenery of the Pyrenees in very beautiful and glowing language, and

said the mountain outlines were plus doux, and there was more grace than in the Swiss landscapes. Of the Chateaux de Chambord, he said that it was unlike everything else : it was as if a number of people had tried to produce the most original building possible. He admired Richardson's novels more than any in any language. Said his best, Clarissa Harlow, I think, was composed after he was seventy ; M. de V—— was convinced the best novels were written by mature age. The result of thought and feeling, not the immediate action of either, being most conducive to excellence in writing.

CHAPTER III.

THREE DAYS AT VERSAILLES.

Versailles, Friday, 2 May, Hôtel du Reservoir.—Close to the palace and gardens. The drive out of Paris through the Place Louis XV., and along the bank of the Seine, was to-day very lovely. The sun shone brightly on the obelisk and beautiful fountains, and lighted up the fine views along the river, with a clear vividness which our London climate, and our coal-smoke, seldom allow. On coming direct from England, or rather London, one of the greatest charms of town scenery abroad is the clearness of city atmosphere. Yet the view from many of the London Bridges has perhaps more materials of beauty than those obtained from the bridges in Paris.

The dome of St. Paul's is certainly finer than the dome des Invalides; and the towers of

Westminster Abbey finer than those of Notre Dame, but how seldom can we see them at a distance very distinctly! At the same time, a Frenchman may well ask where is to be found such an arch as the Barrière de l'Etoile placed in such a position, or such a building as La Madelaine?

At Sevres we went to see the manufacture of china. Some of the paintings are copies from Raphael, and are beautiful; the vases, too, are very fine; but the other things did not please me near so much as the Dresden collection we saw some years ago in Germany. There is nothing in porcelain, I think, so graceful and pretty as the embossed flowers of Dresden china.

Saturday.—Such a day! When I try to look back on what we have seen, all seems like a beautiful dream. First, we walked to the Trianon, through beautiful sweet-smelling gardens, where birds of every variety of note were singing in delightful harmony. We went over all the rich apartments of the palace. After the recollections of Marie Antoinette which it excites, nothing interested me so much as the apartments of the poor Princess Marie; they adjoin those of her sister, Clementine, and the

chapel where she was married is not far off, under the same roof. Everything in her apartment looked so fresh and new—the yellow satin damask chairs and curtains — the bath, which forms a rich Turkish sofa, all—as if just newly furnished for her. In the chapel there is a fine picture, which looks like a Vandyke. It represents some saint restoring a child to life.

Many of the rooms have a very plain appearance from the carved walls being simply painted in white. They were all originally gilt, and in the gorgeous time of Louis XIV. shone no doubt in their full splendour; as the carving is extremely beautiful, the effect must have been very fine. Nothing can exceed the graceful minuteness of some of the wreaths and bouquets of flowers which ornament the doors and walls of even the smallest apartments. They are like our Gibbon's carvings in miniature. Another thing which gives, to our eyes, an unfinished and uncomfortable look, is the want of carpets, and to mine, above all things, the want of books, or even book stands, (except in the library,) or indeed, any sort of place where books, drawings, and comfortable litter could be put. Yet the

royal family must read, and that they cultivate the arts with great success is shewn by the Princess Marie's beautiful models.*

But there was nothing in any of the rooms which gave token of ever having been inhabited; the chairs and sofas are in the most unvarying order; everything appears as if the palace was never used, though the family were in it last week, and, I believe, go there very often. Yet there is plenty of splendour. Malachite vases and pillars, given by the Emperor of Russia to Napoleon, and four onyx vases, given by the King of Spain, (in the great red gallery,) and an exquisite onyx intaglio, found at Pompeii, (over the chimney-piece in great drawing-room,) and many other fine gems set in clocks, &c.

The little Trianon is now used by the Duke of Orleans. It is very small, and has nothing particularly attractive, but the great interest given by the memory of Marie Antoinette. It was her favourite retreat, and near it is her bijou of a theatre, where she sometimes acted in the part of soubrettes; not far off is her dairy and her village, and here she enjoyed herself, and gave vent to the youthful buoyancy of a gay and good na-

* At Compiegne, indeed, there were some easels.

tured disposition. Here she played at shepherdess, at soubrette—at everything, perhaps, but formal etiquette ; and thereby shocked the orthodox taste of the stately courtiers, without winning the love of the lower orders, whose manners she playfully imitated.

There was an air of melancholy in the Jardin Anglais, which surrounds the Petit Trianon and the dilapidated hameau and dairy, to which we walked—caused partly by the recollections of the miserable end of that young creature who formed them, and partly, indeed, by their neglected state.

The walls of a tower above the dairy, called "La Tour de Malbrouk," are fallen down, but a part of the staircase still remains, and these steps, which were ascended by the light feet of Marie Antoinette, that she might gaze from the height on the little paradise of her creation, now stand up against the blue sky like spectres, as if in mockery of what they had been. The tower was called "Malbrouk," from the air "Malbrouk est allé à la guerre," which was sung as a lullaby to the poor young Dauphin, (Louis XVII.) and was his favourite song.

The Swiss cottages are tumbling down ; the

little lake is green, and overgrown with weeds; and where children's mirth and joyous songs were once heard, the silence is now only broken by the croaking of large frogs, and the measured tread of a lonely sentinel, whose musket gleaming here and there among the trees, tells of past strife and present insecurity.

The play-ground of a beautiful Queen of France, a scene of rural life, where all was once peace and holiday enjoyment and farmyard festivity—how strange that its dilapidated remains, its crumbling, unroofed cottages, its stagnant ponds, and grass-grown walks, should now be guarded by military!

In these gardens it was that, when walking alone early one morning, she met a stranger, whose countenance filled her with such horror that she ran home and fainted. This must have been a kind of presentiment of evil, for the man proved to be Santerre, who became her bitter enemy, and exercised so baneful an influence on her fate.

After lingering for some time in this strange scene we walked back to the great palace at Versailles, and, in spite of all fatigue, actually commenced the formidable task of seeing its

gigantic historical galleries, and launched our tired selves into its hosts of recollections, associations, and splendour. Saw the north wing and upper apartments of the centre. And so interesting was it all, that fatigue was forgotten; and after several more miles of walking through the splendid rooms, we were quite sorry when four o'clock struck, and every one was turned out.

I was prepared to find the execution of many of the modern pictures bad; but the subjects are so interesting, and the explanation, names and dates are so comfortably inscribed on everything, that my only feeling was pleasure. There is no occasion to look in a catalogue, which to me is as fatiguing as a dictionary. And now it is late, and we have walked out again since dinner on the terraces, and looked in at the windows, and thought again of all the kings and queens who have lived, and rejoiced, and suffered, amid those splendid rooms. But now that I am sitting, in this comfortable room at the inn, the whole thing, as I said before, seems like a dream. I see the statues in their old quaint attires and kneeling attitudes. That beautiful young daughter of Francis I., with her pretty jewelled head-dress; and the strange-looking

Isabeau de Bavière, wife of Charles VI., with her extraordinary attire and horrible countenance.

These, with Francis I.'s long nose, Louis XIV.'s large wig, Louis XVI.'s good-humoured, silly, fat face, and the last poor Dauphin's innocent stare, are all jumbled together before my eyes in strange confusion, but yet stand out more provokingly distinct than any of the other far more interesting objects we saw.

We were much amused by a picture of Louis XIV. and his family, in which he is drawn half naked, in his wig, without which, it is said, he was never seen, and Monsieur is in the same attire. The ladies, however, Madame (Henriette d'Angleterre), her mother, (the unfortunate wife of Charles I.), and the queen, are all very decently clad. Another picture, the Visit of Louis XIV. to the Invalides, is also very amusing. In it an angel is introduced completely naked and winged, among all the cocked hats, swords, substantial wigs, and the other ponderous realities of an armed court. Poor Louis XVI. is represented, in another picture, distributing charity to the poor. He looks like a great, bloated farmer, very foolish, and very hot, though snow covers the ground. But enough of this; his

cruel fate has so hallowed this unfortunate monarch, that it is impossible to laugh at anything connected with him.

Monday morning.—Before we again proceed to the interesting but interminable labyrinth of historical lore which the gigantic palace contains, I must say something of those parts we saw yesterday. First, the private apartments down stairs (seen by an order) are newly done up, but not quite finished. The most beautiful of these is the Salle des Croisades, which is adorned in the Gothic and baronial style, the ceiling and pillars emblazoned with the arms of all the personages, both royal and knightly, who went to the crusades.

Here, too, are some beautifully carved doors, formerly belonging to a church at Rhodes, and given by the Sultan to the Prince de Joinville. After passing through several other rooms, we went up stairs, and by means of our order were admitted into the private apartments of Marie Antoinette, which open from those of Louis XIV., and look upon an inner court of the right, or south wing.

They are rather small and low, but adorned with the beautiful gilt carving of, I believe, Louis

XIV.'s time, and furnished with green satin damask. Here is poor Louis XVI.'s oratory, separated from a small closet, which looks into the yard, by a thick, large pane of plate-glass. His guard stood on the outside, and could see the king, but not hear what he said.

We then returned to Louis XIV.'s bed-room, which is in the centre of the palace, and shewn to the public. It contains on each side of the state bed two beautiful pictures—a Holy Family, by, I believe, Vandyke; a Virgin and Child, by (the man said) Raphael, but we thought it appeared more like a good Andrea del Sarto.

It was on the balcony of this room that the unfortunate Louis XVI. and his family appeared when called for by the shouts and imprecations of a mad, infuriated mob. They then promised to return to Paris, which they did, guarded, or rather led as prisoners, by the refuse of the population, and insulted by the most turbulent spirits of that reign of disorder.

And this was the last time they beheld the palace of their ancestors. If Louis XIV. could, when reposing in that gorgeous bed, in the centre of the splendid pile he had reared, have

contemplated the remote effects of his lavish expenditure, would he have paused?

We then went (still armed with our order, and therefore accompanied by another of the splendidly attired guardians who wait about in the public rooms,) to the private apartments of Louis XVI., first entering his bed-room, where Louis XV. died, in the left, or north wing. The next is called Salle des Pendules, ou du Meridien, and so on, through five splendid rooms (which, I believe, remain in the same state as when inhabited by the last unfortunate family,) to the old library.

Here there is a curious manuscript, framed—a plan for some improvements at Versailles, on which there are some marginal observations in Louis XIV.'s hand-writing. They are very characteristic of that gay and ever youthful monarch. He objects to the proposed plan, from the design of the figures being too serious, and that it wanted more youthfulness and "*gaiété;*" it must be more *plein de l'enfance.* This made us observe, that one of the great charms of most of Louis XIV.'s carvings and decorations are their being so full of youth, ease, and grace. All

the loves and graces which hover round the ceilings, encircled with flowers and garlands in gilt splendour, are teeming with youth and joy, voluptuous but most refined. How different, how clumsy, heavy, and tawdry do the gilt carvings appear in some of the lately furnished rooms.

From the Library we went to the Salon des Porcelaines, which forms the corner of the second projection, and is very beautiful; and so on through the billiard room to another, and then back. Afterwards, we explored the south wing, which contains the magnificent Gallerie de Batailles. It has been lately renewed, is lighted from the top, and shews to great advantage some fine pictures of Horace Vernet, Sheffer, Schnetz, Gerard, Alaux, and other good painters. A few are bad; but really, upon the whole, there is much of excellence. I doubt whether, if so many—and, above all, such *large*—pictures had been done by English artists, they would have been so good.

We thought the most interesting of these gigantic pictures was the Battle of Fontenoy, in which Marshal Saxe is the principal figure, by H. Vernet, the little episodes in it are so well

done. On the right is a father embracing his son with intense joy for having won a cross of honour, his young comrades looking on—some envious, and others delighted at his success. The father's features seem quivering with emotion, yet only part of the profile is seen. On the other side is a scene of sorrow—a mother leaning over her dying son; and a soldier, mortally wounded, gazing on his companion, who has just expired.

The lower part of that wing is occupied by the campaigns of 1796 to 1810; in short, it is devoted to Napoleon and all his glories. There is a gallery on the second, or, as we should say, third floor, we saw to-day, which contains some very interesting old historical pictures—Blanche of Castille, Queen Elizabeth, Gabrielle, and Dianne de Poitiers Duchess of Valentinois, &c.

This morning, we saw the whole lower story of the centre part; containing a pleasant history of France,—portraits of its kings, its palaces, its celebrated warriors, from Pharamond down to the present time.

In the Gallerie de Louis XIII., in the middle of the front, are some good large pictures of the Marriage of Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria,

and the interview between Louis XIV. and Philip IV. (father of his wife, Marie Therese, of Austria) on the Isle des Faisans.

We then went up to the second story of the north wing. It contains many curious old pictures. A very pretty one of Marie Stuart, that Queen—

"Dear to the Loves, and to the Graces vowed;"

a curious one of the celebrated Agnes Sorel, half undressed; one of Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Charles the Bold, and grandmother to Charles V.—her son was married to the pretty Jeanne la Folle of Arragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella; a good old portrait of Bayard. That of Du Gueslin disappointed me; he is common-looking. There is a very curious old picture of a ball given by Henry III., in which his mother, Catherine de Medicis; his wife, Louise de Lorraine; and many others are dancing. There is also a portrait of Cinq Mars, and one of his love, Marie of Mantua, Queen of Poland, which I looked at with great interest, having just read again De Vigny's beautiful novel. A portrait of Rubens and one of Charles I. pleased me much; another, Christina

of Sweden, looks very much as if she could have changed her religion, and be quite as capricious as she was; she is represented with wild black eyes, and hair which appears too self-willed ever to submit to a coiffeur's dressing. The great Prince of Condé disappointed me by his ugliness. The portrait of Madame de Maintenon is very good. She is in a black dress, and reminded me strongly of Mrs. F——, such as I remember her. There are three strange old pictures representing a fête given at Vienna, on the marriage of Joseph II. to Josephine of Bavaria, in 1765; they appear to be all children, and one of the boys has wings.

On coming down, we passed again through the upper statue gallery of that wing, and took another look at the lovely statue of Joan of Arc. What a face, and what a sublime expression! None of the copies I have seen give one the idea of its being half so beautiful and so inspired. That dear Princess Marie!—she must have been almost content to die, after leaving such a proof of her beautiful mind and powerful genius to the world.

We came home when we were turned out, at four; and now we have actually walked through every part of the shewn apartments, and it

took us about twelve hours to do so, with scarcely any stopping. Yet, after all this hard work, I strolled each evening in the delightful gardens, where the nightingales sang, and the orange-flowers smelt so sweetly. We generally stayed in the gardens till we were turned out, soon after eight o'clock, when the harsh drums silenced the nightingales, but the screech-owls seemed to enjoy the noise, for, as we returned home through the dark alleys, they hooted over our heads in a very melancholy manner.

What a place is this for the Parisians to have so near to them! It is far more magnificent in every way than I expected; and, as merit of any kind is sure to do, it gains ground on acquaintance. The Terrace is peculiarly fine,—a gigantic undertaking well executed.

This evening we lingered out of doors for some time on the Parterre du Nord, and then crossed to the top of the steps which overlook the Tapis Verd of the great canal. How fine is the view from this point: here is seen to the best advantage the whole extent of Louis XIV.'s splendid addition, for it appears that out of respect for his father, he left that part of the palace standing which faces the entrance, and

surrounds the "Cour de Marbre." The garden-front is thrown forward, and its noble wings, from their great extent, and unity of design, unbroken though ornamented by projecting colonnades, have a grand effect.

We crossed to the Parterre du Midi, overlooking the curious Orangery, which is quite in keeping with the Château. There are formal parterres of flowers, and the broad walks are bordered on each side by orange trees, which, to the amount of some hundreds, are thus drawn up, and look as stiff, and in the season must smell as sweet as can well be imagined; noble arched vaults constructed beneath the terrace, serve as their winter residence.

Two splendid flights of marble steps, to the number of 104, at each extremity of the parterre, lead to the garden.

This evening I copied the following peaceful effusion, which was scratched on the balustrade of the Parterre du Midi:—

"L'ANTI-MARSEILLAISE.

Amour sacré de la Patrie,
La Patrie! c'est l'univers.
Révérons cette loi chérie,
C'est la loi des peuples divers,

C'est la loi de la Providence,
Qui nous créa pour le bonheur
De la grande et sainte alliance,
Des peuples à leur Créateur.
Plus d'armes et brisons,
Nos glaives destructeurs.
Jurons, jurons,
Qu'un saint amour unisse tous nos cœurs."

And below it, was written—

" Benit soit celui qui a écrit ces lignes,
Puissent-elles être comprises."

CHAPTER IV.

Visit to Fontainebleau—Journey to Orleans—Blois—Its old castle, and historical recollections.

Fontainebleau, Tuesday, May 18th.—We left our pretty, comfortable rooms at Versailles this morning, at seven o'clock, with much regret.

We found the scenery nearly all the way here far prettier than we expected; and between Versailles and Longjumeau there were some beautiful spots. Soon after leaving the horrible pavé, we passed through the little village of Bievres, and admired its old church and château, with terraced gardens full of flowers, sloping down a woody height to the river. As we wound down its little street, an extensive view over a rich plain opened upon us, and here we met an interesting procession. Some

priests in their robes were chanting, accompanied by one who played a huge trombone, and preceded by some girls, in white dresses, bearing banners, embroidered in white.

After the descent of the hill, the road turns to the left, and affords a picturesque view of Bievres, and its old church; the road continued through a rich and well-cultivated valley, bounded by woods; some remarkably tall and very thin poplars, looking like the ghosts of trees, gave a peculiarity to the view.

Pear and cherry trees were abundant along the road; narrow strips of various cultivation—wheat, rye, peas, cabbages, vines. Some large villages, seen from the road—some country places, —all had a pleasing and prosperous appearance.

Longjumeau occupies two hills, hence its name; a translation of its Latin one, Mons Gemellius. Before we reached it, passed Palaiseau—a pretty little town, where is a well-kept country residence. Beyond Longjumeau, we remarked a curious old chateau; it consists of a circular tower with smaller ones on one side, and is surrounded by a moat; a modern building has been added. I think we heard, at Essone, that its name was St. Geneviève; about twenty

minutes before reaching Essone, we came to *pavé* and the Seine.

Chailly, our last relay, is famous for white horses—we had a team, one of them cost 1000 francs—a good strong horse. After leaving it, we soon entered the Forest of Fontainebleau (Fontaine belle eau), and inorder, I believe, to shew it off, our postillion left the road, and drove for a short way among the trees, a trying undertaking for springs, and a shower-bath occasionally for those behind; but it gave us the sight of some of the finest oaks I ever saw, —magnificent trees! The country around very singular; masses of rock piled together. How splendid is this forest!—well worthy of having days devoted to it for exploring.

On arriving here (at Fontainebleau), we first drove to the Hôtel de France, where a very fat landlady asked us eighteen francs for rooms. Saussat thought it too much, so we decided on going to another. I own I regretted doing so; but from principle we yielded to our courier's economy, and were rewarded. We got very comfortably lodged at the Hôtel de Lyons for eleven francs, and five francs a-head for dinner.

Since then, we have visited the palace, which

has delighted me; it is very interesting, from its antiquity and the numerous historical events which have occurred here. The first rooms we were shewn were those occupied by the Emperor Charles V. during his visit to Francis I., and afterwards, in very different circumstances, by his descendant, Charles IV. of Spain. Pope Pius VI. was also, in Napoleon's time, a prisoner in these apartments; they now belong to the Duke of Orleans.

After seeing the large chapel of Henry IV., we passed through the long, quaint gallery of Francis I., which remains in its old decoration of blue and white, relieved by gilding and fresco painting. We then entered some gorgeous apartments lately restored, and Henry II.'s splendid hall; among its ornaments, the fair Dianne de Poitier's silver crescent is conspicuous. This is the most beautiful room I ever saw, and we lingered a few minutes to sketch it. We then proceeded to the old chapel consecrated by Thomas à Becket, and built, at the time of the original castle, by Louis VII., in 1169. It contains some beautiful painted glass windows, the designs for which were made by the late Princess Marie. The next room we visited was that of

poor Louis XVI. The walls are adorned with fine tapestry, and satin embroidered in chenille, presented by the town of Lyons to the king, on his marriage. The walls of the bed-room are also covered with the same costly material, in graceful patterns of music and flowers. The adjoining apartment was formerly called that of Marie de Medicis, and in it Louis XIII. was born. Napoleon occupied it as his bed-room; and the small one beyond is the celebrated room in which he signed his abdication. It has red damask hangings, and contains two large looking-glasses opposite each other. The important paper was signed on a little, shabby-looking round table, with a painted leg and unvarnished mahogany top. It bears evident marks of being cut or stabbed, as if in anger, with a penknife. In this room there is a fac-simile of the celebrated document which gave peace to Europe; and we remarked the blot after Napoleon's name. Did this arise from accident or agitation?

The Gallery of Diana is very fine. It was built by Henry IV., the joyous king, who dated some of his letters to the fair Gabrielle, "De nos delicieux deserts de Fontainebleau." This splendid gallery was afterwards restored by

Louis XVIII.; and under it is the Gallery of Stags (des Cerfs) where Queen Christina of Sweden caused Monaldeschi to be murdered. How horrible are the details of that atrocious action!

In the apartment of Madame de Maintenon (which is near Henry II.'s Hall), the revocation of the edict of Nantes is said to have been signed. In Marie Antoinette's boudoir, the espagnolettes of the windows were chiselled by her unfortunate husband himself. They represent wreaths of vine leaves, and are extremely beautiful.

St. Louis built a great part of the palace, and, amongst other things, the Church of the Trinity,—which, I think, was embellished by Henry IV. It is much out of repair, but is soon to be restored.

Philip le Bel was born here; so were Henry III. and Louis XIII. Here, in 1636, the great Condé died; and, in this palace, Louis XV. married the Princess Marie, the daughter of Stanislaus Lecksenski, the exiled King of Poland. Their son, the father of Louis XVI., Louis XVIII., and Charles X., died here, in December, 1765, and within these walls, on the 30th of May, 1837, the marriage of the Duke

of Orleans and the Princess Helene, of Mecklenbourg, took place—so there is no want of historical interest.

Here, indeed, I seemed to be transported several centuries back, and surrounded by the spirits of celebrated characters.

> " They spoke unto me from the silent ground,
> They look'd unto me from the pictured wall;
> The echo of my footstep was a sound
> Like to the echo of their own footfall,
> What time their living feet were in the hall."

In the evening we walked in the gardens, and I took a view of the south-east front, containing Henry II.'s room, the oldest chapel, and the little oriel, or rather pavilion, where Louis XIII. was baptized. I then drew one of the Cour des Fontaines, with the little lake and pavilion, or island, where Napoleon is said to have often gone to enjoy repose. This piece of water contains some of the largest carp we ever saw, and in great numbers. I thought of the various and different feelings of Napoleon* in that venerable pile,

* There is a passage in Allison's History that describes so well the desertion of Napoleon by his friends and servants, that I will insert it:—

" And now commenced, at Fontainebleau, a scene of

where he enjoyed the height of prosperity, and experienced all the bitterness of adversity.

Orleans, Wednesday.—The dulness of this day's drive was quite a relief, as it gave one a little time to digest all the interesting sights of the last many days! I cannot bear to have too great a succession of interesting impressions—one has no time to chew the cud of them. But the cessation of interest did not last long, for the approach to Orleans is fine; the cathedral, with its two high towers and spire of Gothic lace-like tracery,

baseness never exceeded in any age of the world, and which forms an instructive commentary on the principles and practice of the Revolution. Let an eye-witness of these hideous tergiversations record them; they would pass for incredible if drawn from any less exceptionable source. 'Every hour,' says Caulaincourt, 'was, after this, marked by fresh voids in the emperor's household. The universal object was, how to get first to Paris. All the persons in office quitted their post without leave or asking permission; one after another they all slipped away, totally forgetting him to whom they owed everything, but who had no longer anything to give. The universal complaint was, that his formal abdication was so long of appearing. 'It was high time,' it was said by every one, 'for all this to come to an end; it is absolute childishness to remain any longer in the antechambers of Fontainebleau, when favours are showering down at Paris:' and with that they all set off for the capital. Such was their anxiety to hear of his abdication,

through which the sky is seen ; the domes of smaller churches, and the first view of the majestic Loire—its vine gardens and its villaed banks—then the fine bridge,—form a succession of pictures which called forth my little sketch book from the bag in which it had peacefully slumbered all day. But French pavé, with its dips, and gutters, and French whip-cracking postillions jolted too much to allow of even a scratch that looks like anything, so my fingers were useless. When we arrived at the Hôtel de la Boule d'Or,

that they pursued misfortune even into its last asylum ; and every time the door of the emperor's cabinet opened, a crowd of heads were seen peeping in to gain the first hint of the much-longed-for news.' No sooner was the abdication and the treaty with the Allies signed, than the desertion was universal ; every person of note around the emperor, with the single and honourable exceptions of Maret and Caulaincourt, abandoned him :—the antechambers of the palace were literally deserted. Berthier even left his benefactor without bidding him adieu ! ' He was born a courtier,' said Napoleon, when he learned his departure ; ' you will see my vice-constable mendicating employment from the Bourbons. I feel mortified that men whom I have raised so high in the eyes of Europe should sink so low. What have they made of that halo of glory through which they have hitherto been seen by the stranger ? What must the sovereigns think of such a termination to all the illustrations of my reign !' "

in a narrow street, it rained, and I hoped for a quiet evening in our little, dark sitting-room, looking on a small yard; but after dinner it cleared up, and a bright gleam of setting sunshine attracted us to the old cathedral, which is a fine building.

The exterior has been restored, and the buttresses are ornamented with large and handsome pinnacles. It was too late to ascend the tower, so we contented ourselves with an interesting walk on the bridge.

Thursday, May 20th.—This morning, on our way to the cathedral we saw the statue of Jeanne d'Arc. The group which Inglis describes, stood in the Rue Royale, and was erected, as he says, by Charles VII.; but it was destroyed during the Revolution. Inglis, then, could not have seen it, and I cannot well imagine how he could have been at Orleans without observing the present statue.

It represents the heroine in female dress, with flowing garments, wearing a cuirass, and in the act of fighting; but I think that the statue of the Princess Marie is much more accordant than this, with the enthusiasm of Jeanne's character and her strong devotion. The costume, too, is

infinitely better. On the pedestal are bas-reliefs in bronze, representing the four principal incidents of Jeanne's career: the statue itself is in bronze.

We found some one in the sacristy of the cathedral, and ascended one of the towers—a good appetite-giving operation, for the twin towers over the western entrance are 240 feet high; they are richly ornamented; the figures of four angels stand at the angles of the balustrade, these are 15 feet high; so the entire height is 255 feet.

There is a lofty, but not a handsome spire, which rises directly from the roof in the centre of the church, its cross is 260 feet high. This spire inclines very perceptibly; it has been propped up, and no danger is apprehended. According to our informant, this cathedral is 400 feet long, and 100 feet high.

The original structure was of very ancient date, so far back as the time of Constantine, for Orleans was the ancient Gebanum: Henry IV. commenced its restoration, which was continued by subsequent kings, until Louis XV. built the towers. The exterior is very rich. Its buttresses,

which are numerous, perhaps eleven or twelve, have upon each, three rows of tall and ornamented pinnacles ; these have all been recently restored. The interior is very plain—the simplicity of the early English—no screens. A handsome modern grille separates the choir from the nave.

The view from the top of the tower is extensive ; but over a flat country. The course of the Loire is traced for some distance, and on a clear day, with a glass, the castles of Chambord and Blois are visible. The town is tolerably large ; its population 40,000. The new street (Jeanne d'Arc) is a great improvement ; we saw the tracings of the railroad to Paris, now in progress.

Thursday, 20*th*. — *In the carriage.* Rather disappointed in the views on leaving Orleans. Country flat, and too many poplars—but the broad river looks well, and the scene is enlivened by the square, white sails of boats sailing up and down ; and they continue to be seen through the trees, though we have lost sight of the river. The garden-like vineyards are very neat, bordered with walnut-trees, and some surrounded by great wooden railings, or trellices.

Then, here and there, in the midst of them,

appear little farm-houses, to each of which a long avenue of quaintly-cut lime-trees leads from the road; and these buildings, with their old high roofs, green blinds, and formal little flower gardens, have a rural and homely air, far preferable to that of the spruce villas of retired merchants, usually seen in the neighbourhood of large towns, and look as if they contained a far happier class of people.

Just changed horses at the little village of St. Ay, and passed two campagnes surrounded by beautiful gardens; where a profusion of roses and stocks smelt very sweet; and peonies of various colours and great size gave a most brilliant air to the formal, but well-kept flower-beds. I rather like formality, particularly in gardens.

The country has now become more flat; and we have lost the river, but the quaintly-shaped church of Nôtre Dame de Clery has come in sight on the opposite bank. It was built by Louis XI., for his favourite Madonna, his "chere petite maitresse;" to whom he was overheard asking pardon for having caused his brother to be poisoned. Under its roof he was buried; and the heart of his son, Charles VIII., is preserved there.

I have heard a curious legend of that old church, which states that, when any one in danger at sea vowed a pilgrimage to Nôtre Dame de Clery, the bell used to toll of its own accord. And now we have left it behind us ; and the pretty village of Meung is just seen at the end of a turn in the road, with its church and a fine old red-brick château, embosomed in woods, and surmounted by high pinnacles.

It is gone ; but the ancient town of Beaugency has appeared, and its fine ruined castle, close to the river, which winds along to our left.

We got out, and while horses were changing, walked down through the little winding narrow streets of Beaugency, to see the old castle.

The outer walls of one large square tower remain. It is of great height, and is said to have been built in the time of Julius Cæsar. The windows are still ornamented with beautiful carving, and the floors only fell in about three years ago.

In many of the little streets are old houses and half ruined towers, some beautifully ornamented; and not far from the old castle, there is a curious high tower, surmounted by small

pinnacles, and the remains of some arches at the bottom, ornamented inside, which appear to be Roman.

Another irregular street, with carved doorways opening into little garden-courts, led us down to the river, and its long bridge of thirty-nine arches, (we could only count twenty-nine.) The opposite bank appears flat and uninteresting, but we liked Beaugency much. It is a clean and pleasant-looking little town, in which there seemed to be few indications of either poverty or riches; no large modern mansions, and the old dilapidated houses are only half inhabited — sometimes only a few of the windows, or a single story, had glass in them, shewing that those rooms alone were occupied; but they were full of flowers, and luxuriant vines trailed along the old carving of the ruined and glassless windows, and over the little Gothic doorways—giving a cheerful air, and making the half-deserted abodes of former splendour appear venerable, but not gloomy. One of them reminded us of the finely-carved house at Stirling, (of the Regent Morton, I believe,) near the old palace, which was never finished.

Soon after leaving Beaugency, the country became very bare, and we saw no beauty of any kind. At Mer, where we next changed horses, there was nothing remarkable but the highly-decorated tower of its Gothic church.

At the next post, Ménars, we went to see the villa of Madame de Pompadour, and were much disappointed with it; though the house is well built, and comfortable-looking. The garden terraces, which slope down to the river, are ornamented with statues and sculptured vases; but the view they command is by no means pretty; the only interest about it is derived from its former celebrated possessor, and from the dark Forest of Chambord, which covers the flat plain beyond the villages and poplar-bordered vine grounds on the opposite bank.*

The whole place has a deserted and neglected look; the terraced parterres are turned into corn fields, and the borders (in which, however, some beautiful roses were blooming) are overgrown with weeds. The redeeming feature in this, as in many ill-kept French châteaux, is the profusion of orange trees, in large green boxes, which

* Inglis has made a mistake about this villa, which he places at Beaugency.

adorn the walks. We could not see the interior, where some of Madame de Pompadour's furniture still remains, because it was jour de fête, and the servants were all amusing themselves.

The same sort of flat country till we approached near Blois. The town extends on both sides of the river, and, with its fine old castle and church, which stand on the height to our right, and the sloping gardens and noble bridge to the left, forms an interesting and beautiful picture.

Six o'clock. — In the Hôtel d'Angleterre at Blois, close to the bridge, where our sitting-room at the corner commands a view up and down the river, and is approachable only by an open balcony, full of flowers. Very pleasant such a mild evening as this, but in rain or cold would make us grumble. W—— met a gentleman on this romantic-looking balcony, who told him some good traits of the first possessor of Menars, and one very creditable to the present owner also.

The road formerly went on the outside of Madame de Pompadour's grounds ; and to save the public this detour, she offered to allow it to pass, as it now does, close to her château. Its present possessor, the Prince de C——, has

erected a large school and gymnase, entirely at his own expense. It was the fine building near the château, which we saw.

We are delighted with Blois, and the air seems so light and gentle here, that, compared with the depressing heaviness of some other places, it feels like eating soufflé after a tough bit of beef.

The people are very civil and talkative. A nice old woman shewed us the castle. We met, too, a pleasant old French gentleman, and afterwards a farmer, who, with his little son, accompanied us in our walk home. He was full of information, and shewed us the church of St. Nicholas: a fine old building—which has lately been restored—it suffered much during the revolution, and was used as a stable.

The old castle here, and indeed the whole place, puts me in mind of Stirling—not in form, but it has the same character—a deserted royal residence, full of interesting recollections, the remains of ancient splendour mingled with present decay and misery. The part of it, too, where Guise was assassinated by the order of Henry III., corresponds in position (overhanging a high precipice) with that part of Stirling Castle where Douglas was murdered.

The exterior of this castle, and the interior of

the court, with its curious open staircases, are most picturesque. The part built by Louis XII., is of red brick, with stone friezes and quaint carvings: the bricks look so fresh, that it appears of a much later date than the buildings of his son-in-law and successor, Francis I. Louis XII. was born there; his young wife, Anne of Brittany, occupied the upper apartments erected by him. These were afterwards inhabited by the Duchess de Nemours and Duchess of Guise, during the fatal catastrophe which occurred in the reign of Henry III, the too-confiding Duke of Guise occupying those below. At the time of the murder, Henry III. occupied the upper part of Francis I.'s building, over the apartment of his mother, Catherine de Medicis.

The Salle des Etats, a fine old room, with a row of Gothic pillars and arches, was erected by St. Louis (IX.) The only apartments which retain any of their old carved wainscots, are those of Catherine de Medicis; the ceilings of these are beautiful, particularly her oratory, a sort of large oriel window projecting over the dizzy height on which the castle is built; and the room beyond it from whence poor Marie de Medicis, (wife to Henry IV.,)made her escape by a ladder of ropes, when imprisoned here by

Richelieu. Near this spot are the dungeons called Les Oubliettes—a name which awfully proclaims their destination—they are at the bottom of an old round tower; and here the Cardinal de Guise was murdered the day after his brother.

The oldest part of the castle is a massive tower at the western corner, erected by the early Counts of Blois. And on this spot, where our King Stephen once lived, Catherine de Medicis built her observatory, and the stone table where her horoscope stood is still there. We ascended the same old wooden staircase, so often trodden by that imperious queen; it is now very crazy, but I thought this the most interesting part of the whole castle. It commands, too, a good view of the other portions of the building, with that of the whole town and river below. What a mixture of religious observance, superstition, and cruelty, was Catherine! Close to her oratory was the gloomy dungeon where she confined her enemies, and to it was an entrance even from her room.*

* On considering over the numerous old places I have seen possessing interesting historical associations, I find none gave me so much pleasure, or transported me so vividly into the past, as Linlithgow. Queen Margaret's bower, the room where Mary was born, and the chapel, where the ghost is said

She died here in 1588, soon after the murder of Guise by her son. The castle is now a barrack ; the part where Guise was murdered being devoted to soldiers' bed-rooms, so that the smell, the noise, and bustle of its present occupants destroy all romance. I could think of nothing. The disagreeable present put all thoughts of past interest to flight, and proved too much even for the graphic description of the scene in James's Henry of Guise, or for the recollection of that lovely Margaret de Valois who was here married to Henry IV.

It is strange how often we find that some apparently absurd prophecies have been fulfilled, and rhymed sayings, which have foretold terrible events, have come to pass.

In allusion to the murder of Guise, l'Almanac de Billy gravely said that, Pasquier prognosticated nothing good for all the year 1588, and less still for the month of December. Indeed, all the predictions were threatening. The people expected to see realized the prophecy of Nostradamus :—

to have appeared to James, warning him of danger—all these have an undisturbed look, as if desolation had reigned there ever since, and carry the imagination back, without ption, to the scenes of past centuries.

" Paris conjure un grand meurdre commettre,
Blois lui fera sortir son plein effet."

The friends of Guise commented on—as the fatal announcement of some dreadful event which should strike the House of Lorraine—these four verses des Centuries, which the credulity of the epoch made terrible :—

" En l'an qu'un œil en France regnera,
La cour sera en un bien facheux trouble,
Le grand de Bloys, son amy tuera ;
Le regne mis en mal et doute double."*

A strange circumstance is connected with the murder of Guise, and is an instance of the retributive justice which we often see, in history, pur-

* Another of these remarkable sayings was fulfilled in the reign of Louis XIII. It was said that sometime before the tragic end of the interesting Cinque Mars and his friend De Thou, Nostradamus composed the following enigma :—

" Quand *bonnet rouge* passera par la fenêtre,
A *quarante onces* on coupera la tête et *tout* perira."

Bonnet rouge proved to be the Cardinal Richelieu, who at his great fête, was carried through a window to go to the theatre. A mark was eight ounces ; therefore, forty ounces made five marks (Cinque Mars). At the same time that his implacable enemy was triumphant at Paris, poor Cinque Mars, (forty ounces,) was beheaded, and De Thou (Tout) perished with him on the scaffold.

suing criminals. It is said that, in the very room where Guise was murdered, he himself plotted, sixteen years before, the massacre of the Huguenots. The man who destroyed him, too, Henry III., seems never to have enjoyed any peace or happiness after he had committed the horrible crime, and was himself murdered not long afterwards.

Friday, 21.—Rainy and cold. The romantic balcony where I lingered last night on my way to the bedroom, gazing at the stars, was this morning so wet as to oblige me to put on goloshes, and hold up an umbrella in going from one room to the other. In the evening, the weather cleared up, and we had a pleasant walk to the Cathedral, and in the gardens of the "Eveché." The Cathedral is not so fine or so large as the church of St. Nicholas, which we saw last night. A violent thunder-storm drove us home, but after dinner we were again attracted out by a fine sunset, and went up to the old castle. I tried to sketch the interior of the court, but such numbers of soldiers surrounded me, that I could not do it satisfactorily. We got a recollection, however, of Louis XII. and Francis I. buildings, with the three curious open stair-cases; and imagined what it must have been when first built by Louis XII., "tout de neuf, et

tant somptueux qui bien sembloit œuvre de Roi," so said an old chronicler, Jean of Auton.

Besides the number of celebrated historical events which happened at Blois, there are many less known, but almost as interesting.

Here the young Queen Isabella of Valois, widow of King Richard II., and called the Little Queen, found peace and joy with her second husband, the Duke of Orleans. Our unfortunate Richard was murdered when his young Queen was only thirteen years old; and she was so shocked at his tragic end, that even after many years had elasped, she steadily refused the hand of the gallant Henry of Monmouth, though, as Froissart said, "Richard of Bourdeaux, (II.) had been far too old for her; but the person now offered was suitable in every respect, being no other than the Prince of Wales." She continued, however, to refuse this accomplished prince (afterwards Henry V.) "in a manner," says Monstrelet, "exceedingly touching, as all who approached her, French or English, bore testimony." She was after some delay and difficulty restored to her father, the King of France, and as we read in Shakspeare's tragedy:—

"My Queen to France from whence set forth in pomp,
She came adorned hither, like sweet May,
Sent back like hallowmas, or shortest day."

Some time afterwards she accepted the offer of her cousin, Charles of Orleans; and it is delightful to think that after all her vicissitudes and misfortunes, she enjoyed great happiness in this venerable castle of Blois.

She was idolized by her husband, and he was not only amiable and valiant, but one of the most accomplished Princes in Europe, and composed many beautiful poems.*

His mother, Violante of Milan, was a very interesting person, and during the first year of her son's marriage, she came to Blois, almost broken-hearted for the loss of her husband, who had been basely assassinated by his kinsman, the Duke of Burgundy. Here she took for her "embleme," une chante-pleure (un arrosoir), between two SS, initials of soupir and souci, and the melancholy device—

"Rien ne m'est plus,
Plus ne m'est rien."

* There is a richly illuminated copy of poems in the British Museum, which is supposed to have been transcribed for Henry VII.

was embroidered on the walls of her apartments, which were hung with black. This unfortunate widow found great pleasure in the society of Isabella, and her last hours were soothed by the presence of her beloved daughter-in-law.

But our poor Queen Isabella's happiness did not last long; at the early age of twenty-one, she died, after giving birth to a daughter. The Duke of Orleans was almost frantic at the loss of his beautiful wife, and eloquently deplored her untimely end in some lines, which begin—

"J'ai fait l'obseque de madame."

I will quote a translation that Miss Strickland has given of them in her interesting history of this Queen's life.

"J'AI FAIT L'OBSEQUE DE MADAME.

"To make my lady's obsequies
My love a minster wrought,
And, in the chantry service there,
Was sung by doleful thought.
The tapers were of burning sighs
That light and odour gave,
And grief illuminèd by tears
Irradiated her grave;
And, round about, in quaintest guise,
Was carved—'Within this tomb there lies
The fairest thing to mortal eyes.'

" Above her, lieth spread a tomb
Of gold and sapphires blue:
The gold doth shew her blessedness—
The sapphires mark her true;
For blessedness and truth in her
Were livelily portrayed;
When gracious God, *with both his hands*,
Her wondrous beauty made;
She was, to speak without disguise,
The fairest thing to mortal eyes.

" No more, no more; my heart doth faint,
When I the life recal
Of her who lived so free from taint,
So virtuous deem'd by all;
Who in herself was so complete,
I think that she was ta'en,
By God to deck his Paradise,
And with his saints to reign;
For well she doth become the skies,
Whom, while on earth, each one did prize—
The fairest thing to mortal eyes!"

This accomplished prince was afterwards taken prisoner, when fighting valiantly at the battle of Agincourt, and sent by Henry V. to England. Some of his most beautiful poems were composed during a weary captivity of twenty-three years in the Tower of London.

" It was at the Château de Blois," says Saussaye, " that Charles d'Orleans, one of the first

days of the first spring which smiled on him since his return to France, when beholding the magnificent country which he saw from the height of his royal residence, and enjoying the beauties of nature with the feeling of a captive before whose eyes the prison doors have just opened, composed this charming rondel :"—

" Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure, et de pluye,
Et c'est vestu de broderye,
De soleil raiant* cler et beau.

" Il n'y a beste, ne oiseau
Qui en son jargon ne chante ou crye :
Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure, et de pluye.

" Rivière, fontaine, et ruisseau
Portent, en livrée jolie,
Gouttes d'argent, d'orfevrerie ;
Chacun s'habille de nouveau,
Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure, et de pluye."

The following ballad was also written at the Château de Blois :—

" En tirant d'Orleans â Blois,
L'autre jour par eau venoye
Si rencontrai, par plusieurs fois,
Vaisseaux, ainsy que je passoye,

* Rayonnant.

Qui cingloient leur droite voye
Et aloient legièrement,
Pour ce qu'eurent, comme veoye*
A plaisir et à gré le vent.

" Mon cueur, penser et moi, nous trois,
Les regardasmes à grant joye ;
Et dit mon cueur, à basse voix,
Volontiers en ce point seroye ;
De confort† la voile tendroye,
Si je cuidoye‡ seurement
Avoir, ainsy que je vouldroye,
A plaisir et à gré le vent.

" Mais je trouve, le plus des mois,
Le eaue de fortune si quoye:‖
Quant ou bateau§ du monde vois
Que jamais d'espoir je n'auroye ;
Souvent en chemin demouroye,¶
En trop grant ennuy longuement ;
Pour néant en vain attendroye
A plaisir et à gré le vent.

" Les nefs dont ci devant parloye
Montoient et je descendoye ;
Contre les vaques du tourment,
Quant il lui plaira, Dieu m'envoye
A plaisir et à gré le vent."

The Emperor Charles V. passed through Blois and stopped at the castle. His visit was de-

* Comme je vis. † Consolation. ‡ Si je pensais.
‖ L'eau de fortune si calm.
§ Au bateau. ¶ Demeurerais.

scribed in a short poem, little known, composed on the occasion of this fête, by Claudius Chappuis, valet to the king :—

> " Blois, noble ville, à sa joyeuse entrée
> Triomphalement a esté accoustrée ;
> Ne délaissant aucun poinct en arrière,
> Pour luy monstrer affection entière," &c.

Mademoiselle de Montpensier thus speaks of a visit she made to her father, the Duke d'Orleans, at Blois, in 1655 :—" L'air de Blois me donna un rhume épouvantable qui dura trois semaines, je ne sortais, ne dormais, ni ne mangeois ; je m'amusai à jouer, parceque cela m'ennuyoit moins que d'entretenir les gens que je voyois."

Her description of the visit of Louis XIV. there, three years afterwards, when on his road to St. Jeanne de Luz, to marry the Infanta of Spain, is rather amusing :—" On alla diner à Blois, où mon père donna à manger au roi dans le château. Mes sœurs vinrent au bas des degrez (le grand escalier à jour) reçevoir sa Majesté. Par malheur, de certaines mouches que l'on nomme cousins, avoient mordu ma sœur ; comme ce qu'elle a de plus de beau est le teint, elles le lui avaient si gâté et la gorge qu'elle avoit maigre, comme l'ont ordinairement les

filles de quatorze ans, qu'elle faisoit pitié à voir. Ajoutez à cela le chagrin ou elle étoit d'avoir cru épouser le roi. On lui avait toujours tenu ce discours, et on l'appeloit toujours la petite reine."

It was during this short sojourn of Louis XIV., at Blois, that he saw, for the first time, Madlle. de la Vallière, whose mother had for her second husband M. de Saint Remy, first master of the household to the Duke of Orleans.

In the following January, Charles II., then an exile, visited the Castle of Blois, on his return from the Pyrenees, where he had vainly endeavoured to enter into negotiations with Mazarin. Gaston, the Duke of Orleans, made, in favour of his youngest daughter, another attempt at marriage with the English prince, which his eldest daughter had equally thought of, in her innumerable projects of an establishment. "L'on ajusta fort ma sœur," said Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who does not seem to have been very fond of her sister, "parceque l'on là vouloit marier à quelque prix que ce fût."

In later times, also, this old town of Blois was the scene of interesting events. The Empress Marie-Louise took refuge here after Paris was

taken; and, when the news arrived of Napoleon's abdication, she was shamefully deserted by nearly all her attendants.*

* Allison says, in his most interesting History of Europe,—"Meanwhile, the Imperial Court at Blois, where the Empress Marie Louise and the King of Rome had been since the taking of Paris, was the scene of selfishness more marked, desertions more shameless, than even the saloons of Fontainebleau. Unrestrained by the awful presence of the emperor, the egotism and cupidity of the courtiers there appeared in hideous nakedness, and the fumes of the Revolution expired amidst the universal baseness of its followers. No sooner was the abdication of the Emperor known, than all her court deserted the Empress: it was a general race who should get first to Paris to share in the favours of the new dynasty. Such was the desertion, that in getting into her carriage on the 9th April, at Blois, to take the road to Orleans, no one remained to hand the Empress in but her chamberlain. The Empress, the King of Rome, were forgotten; the grand object of all was to get away, and to carry with them as much as possible of the public treasure which had been brought from Paris with the government. In a few days it had all disappeared. At Orleans, the remaining members of Napoleon's family also departed:—Madame Mere and her brother, Cardinal Fesch, set out for Rome; Prince Louis, the ex-king of Holland, for Switzerland; Joseph and Jerome soon after followed in the same direction. The Empress at first declared her resolution to join Napoleon; maintaining that there was her post, and that she would share his fortunes in adversity as she had done in prosperity. The wretched sycophants, however, who were still about her person, spared no pains to alienate her from the emperor: they represented that he had espoused her

only from policy; that she had never possessed his affections; that during the short period they had been married he had had a dozen mistresses, and that she could now expect nothing but reproaches and bad usage from him. Overcome partly by these insinuations, and partly by her own facility of character and habits of submission, she, too, followed the general example: her French guards were dismissed, and replaced by Cossacks; she took the road from Orleans to Rambouillet, where she was visited successively by the emperor her father, and the Emperor Alexander; and at length she yielded to their united entreaties, and agreed to abandon Napoleon."

CHAPTER V.

EXCURSION TO THE CHATEAU DE CHAMBORD.

Saturday.—Passed at Chambord. We were delighted with the old palace, which belongs to the poor Duc de Bordeaux, and is the only possession he retains in all France. The road there, and indeed, the country about it, is very ugly. I do not see the "gloom" which the descriptions I have read generally talk of—the avenues of little stunted poplars, the ditches, and fields are too trivial and common-place to be gloomy.

We passed just opposite to Madame de Pompadour's villa, and congratulated ourselves on not having followed the advice of the postmaster at Menars, who wanted us to be ferried across the river, and go direct from thence to Chambord. The road is so very bad, that had we done so, our carriage would probably have been broken or upset.

The last league was the worst, particularly within the wall — that nice old wall which encircles the demesne, as is the case so frequently in Ireland; our postillion, however, differed from his Irish brother in driving slowly, thus affording us, as we approached, full leisure to contemplate the beauties of the château. In Ireland we should have rattled along, as Pat infallibly reserves "the trot for the avenue."

And magnificent indeed is the château. Striking is the view of the mighty pile, with its vast assemblage of towers, lofty roofs, points, highly-ornamented chimneys, and cupolas, with the graceful pinnacle, surmounting the great staircase du Lys in the centre. It struck me as perhaps the finest specimen of a French château, I had ever seen. The effect was dignified, yet mournful, when one thought that after all the immense sums expended there, it was impossible that the palace could ever again be turned to account, for were it to be repaired, it would not be suited to modern wants, or to the present state of things; but there it stands, a lone monument of by-gone splendours, a sad possession of one now exiled, perchance for ever, from his native land, and the throne of his ancestors.

I am not quite certain whether the upper part is not overwrought in comparison with the severe simplicity of the basement story. I am aware that it is the usual march of buildings, (as in the coliseum and a hundred others,) to rise from the substantial and solid to the light and ornamented; but still the eye should not be hurt by the least want of congruity in the parts. And very beautiful as the exterior of the main building is, with its exquisitely wrought details, the effect is, I think, much injured by the low buildings added in the time of Louis XIV.

The interior, in general, presents an immense number of rooms, of no great size, and almost totally devoid of anything accordant with the date of the building; but the external staircases at the two corners are extremely elegant, and richly worked; and the cruciform Salles des Gardes, despite the injury done them by being lopped of their height by an intervening floor, are very beautiful. They surround the famous escalier Du Lys; and this floor, which so nearly spoils one of the grandest designs in architecture I ever saw, is said to have been introduced by Louis XIV. That a Prince so celebrated for his taste and grandeur, should have done this bar-

barous act, seems most wonderful. In one place, too, the beautiful balustrades of the staircase have been sacrificed to make room for the King's box ,when plays were represented in one of the four rooms. Molière's comedy of the Bourgeois Gentilhomme, was performed for the first time here.

I much admired Francis the First's decoration of the vaulted ceilings : his initial (F) and his device (the Salamander) occur in alternate compartments ; they strongly reminded a friend of mine who had lately travelled in Egypt, of the beautiful arched apartments at Abydos, (Arabat el Matfoon,) which are similarly ornamented, with the name and the prefix of Osirei I., father of Remeses the Great. I much liked, too, the little cabinet, where the same ornament is repeated in miniature.

It was in this room that Francis I., in a fit of jealousy or disappointment, caused by the fickle conduct of the fair Diane de Poitiers, wrote with the point of a diamond these well known words on a window-pane :—

" Souvent femme varie,
Mal habile qui s'y fie."

Saussaye says, that Louis XIV., " in quite

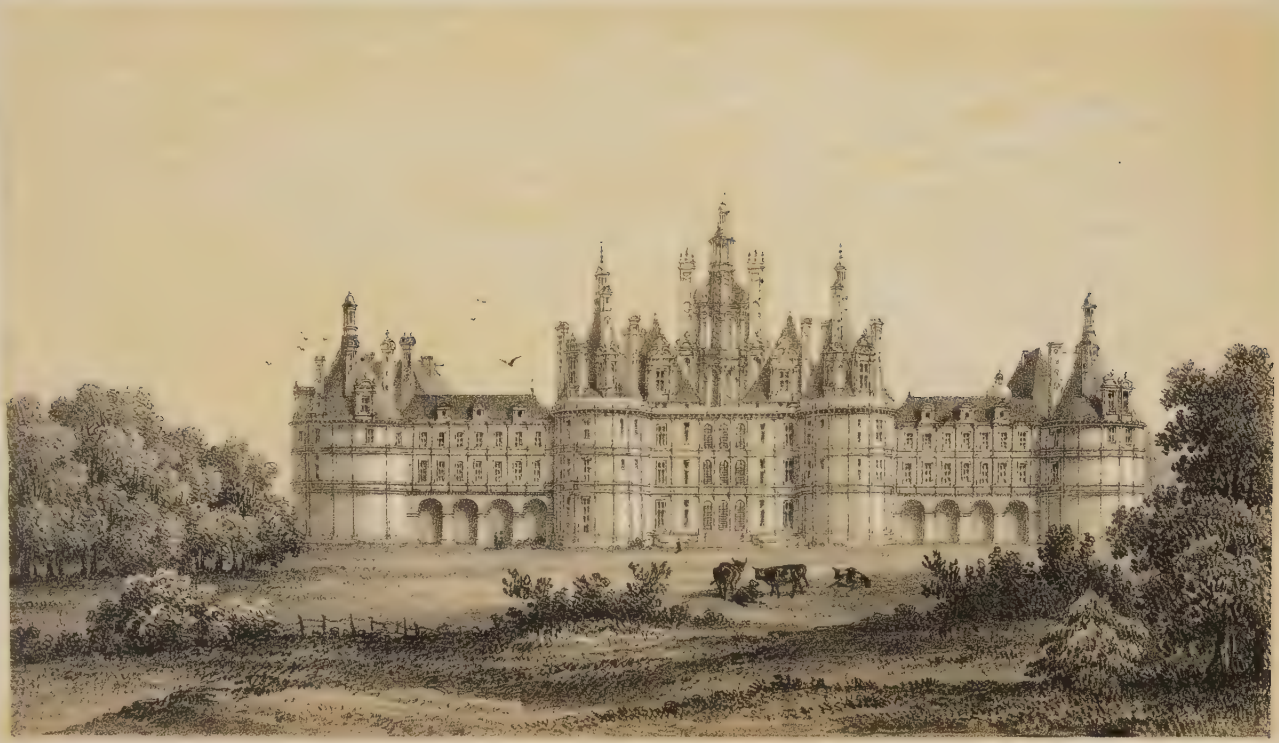
a different disposition, because he was young and happy, sacrificed these lines of his ancestor to Madame de la Vallière, and broke the pane to shew his high opinion of woman's constancy." In this room, too, Madlle. de Montpensier is said to have breathed on the window, and written with her finger the name of Lauzun—a first confession of her affection for that celebrated Duke.

I was rather disappointed at the effect of the chapel at the other side of the palace, into the decorations of which, the crescent of Diane de Poitiers has so strangely crept—the device of a goddess, anything but chaste. But I was specially charmed with the grand staircase du Lys—the gem of the whole—the conception beautiful, and charmingly executed; and its double spiral lines rising conjointly, now spreading, now crossing, suggested to me the idea of arms gently extended, the most graceful contours, and a multitude of wild, but delightful fancies. Catherine de Medicis used the pavilion at the summit of this staircase as her observatory. It was a pleasing occupation to try to re-clothe those deserted halls and galleries with their rich hangings and gorgeous tapestries, and to re-people them with the

gay and lovely dames, and the gallant bearded cavaliers, rustling in their gold and jewels, their velvets and satins, who formed the brilliant courts of the luxurious monarchs who there pursued their mad revels and mysterious intrigues.

The best description I ever read of this celebrated staircase, is given by Madlle. de Montpensier, when speaking of her first visit to Chambord when quite young: "Une des plus curieuses et plus remarquables choses de la maison, c'est le degré, fait d'une manière qu'une personne peut monter et l'autre descendre sans qu'elles se rencontrent bien qu'elles se voient, à quoi Monsieur, (her father,) prit plaisir à se jouer d'abord avec moi. Il étoit au haut de l'escalier lorsque j'arrivai; il descendait quand je montai, et rioit bien fort de me voir courir dans la pensée que j'avois de l'attraper: J'étois bien aise du plaisir qu'il prenoit, et je le fus encore d'avantage quand je l'eus joint."

After we had passed several hours wandering about the palace, I went to make some sketches, one of which is here introduced, as it gives a general idea of the pile, though it is not nearly so picturesque as some I took in the interior of the



Sketched by Lady Chatterton and drawn on stone by Bichebois

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courts. We were so delighted with the place, that we could easily imagine the Emperor Charles V.'s admiration of it must have been sincere, when he said the palace was "Un abrégé de ce que peut effectuer l'industrie humaine." He was there in 1539; and, as an old account of Chambord says, "Il y passa quelques jours pour la délactation de la chasse aux daims qui estoient là dans un des plus beaux parcs de France, et à très grand foison."

There are various superstitions connected with the first origin of this castle, in early ages, that have amused me by their extreme contradiction: some ascribing it to the powers of evil, others to the actions of good spirits. The most popular, perhaps, is the legend of the Chasseur Noir. "When," says an old chronicle, "the timid countryman, after having walked on the 'herbe qui égure,' finds himself, about midnight, near the pavilion of Montfrault, he is likely to meet the terrific figure of the nightly horseman, clad in black, and followed by his coal-black hounds. This was no other than Theobald of Champagne, called 'The Old,' and 'The Cheat,' the first hereditary Count of Blois, and the most complete type of those barons—hard as iron—

who lived in the first period of the feudal system. This same baron, during the fine nights of autumn, may be heard starting from Montfrault, with a great troop of men, horses, dogs, and horns, to hunt in the air. After having rested a little at the ruins of Bury, they return to Montfrault. The same noise which was heard at their departure continues during this aerial hunt, though neither horses, dogs, nor huntsmen were visible."

We purchased, yesterday, a very interesting account of Blois, written by M. de Saussaie. Its historical details are excellent, and well told. It contains much valuable information in a small compass. I discovered by it that the swan pierced by the dart--an ornament which I observed on the ceiling of one of the rooms at Chambord, of Catherine de Medicis' apartment, —was the device of Claude, the eldest daughter of Louis XII. and Anne of Brittany, who married Francis I., and must have been the first occupant of these apartments. Her device was the swan, with three C's—Clauda Candida Candidas, Blanche parmi les blanches.

CHAPTER VI.

Carriage notes between Blois and Tours—Expedition to Chenonçeaux—Legend of the Ambitious Jewess.

Notes scribbled in the Carriage.—Soon after we left Blois, on looking back,we caught a fine view of the town; and now the country improves, and we begin to see the truth of de Vigny's description of Loire scenery. Four boats are generally fastened together, to present, I suppose, with their large square sails, a greater resistance to the current than they could do singly. They have a very good effect. Just passed a pretty, comfortable-looking château, on the other side, belonging to Baron Sygomen. The road keeps close to the river, which is very pleasant; the smells of vegetation are so sweet, after the rain of yesterday—quite delicious! I cannot spoil my enjoyment by writing; and yet the object of

doing so is to prolong the enjoyment, by trying thus to impress it on our minds.

At the first post, Chousy.—The river and its banks look pretty and calm—rather tame, but the sort of scenery, "qui," as Balsac says, "repose l'ame." The river winds through meadows and vine-banks, and then appears to lose itself in a forest, which closes the picture, not very far off.

Marshy ground and uninteresting country for a little more than a mile, and then the Castle of Chaumont comes in sight. It was given to Diane de Poitiers, by Henry II.; she afterwards resigned it to Catherine de Medicis, who gave her Chenonçeaux, in exchange.

It was built in the fifteenth century, by the family of Amboise, and the cardinal of that name (Louis XII.'s minister) was born there. Besides all this, it is to me very interesting from being the residence of Cinq Mars. The situation beautiful—much the prettiest bit we have yet seen on the Loire. Chaumont is, indeed, a noble building, with numerous towers, pinnacles, and picturesque irregularities, and stands on a high perpendicular bank embosomed in fine woods, with the chapel described by De Vigny,

half way down, and the pretty village below, close by the river's side.

Changed horses at Veuvex, the second post, and we can still see Chaumont in the distance behind us. It is quite a redeeming feature in the far-famed, but, to us, rather disappointing, Loire scenery.

Afterwards, there was nothing very particular till we came in sight of Amboise. The ancient palace there is a noble pile, situated on a precipitous rock, overlooking the old town and the Loire, with its little island and two long picturesque bridges.

It rained heavily on our arrival at the inn, but we got into a nice little carriage there, and drove to the castle, crossing the river by the two bridges. We dismounted at the bottom of a curious large round tower, which flanks the high rock on which the old palace is built, and forms a covered and well-defended road up to it. We entered the large tower, and walked up the winding road inside. The ascent is very gradual, and was used even for carriages in ancient times. Its arched roof is beautifully carved, and ornamented with grotesque figures; and Gothic

windows, pierced through the thick walls, give good light.

The interior of the pillar, round which this road-staircase winds, was formerly used as a prison, and is lighted by smaller windows, which give a borrowed light, or rather gloom, from the staircase outside. How tantalizing it must have been to the prisoners in these dungeons to hear the tramp of steeds and men ascending and descending around them, telling of liberty and joy no longer theirs!

We came out at the top of this strange place into pretty gardens and terraces, bordered with orange-trees, which led us to the old castle. The furniture of this royal residence is plain, but the rooms looked comfortable, and the views from their windows are very fine. There is some beautiful carving on the corbels in the lower galleries; we admired particularly a sentimental bat, with its claw on its heart, and its eyes full of languishing melancholy; the feathers are beautifully carved, and the expression of the face most pitiful. Bats and owls occur in great numbers: they seem to have been here a favourite device.

But the gem of the place is the little chapel,

built by Charles VII.; to which we went, through the gardens, after we had seen the palace. It stands, like the castle, on the very edge of a perpendicular rock, overlooking the town. It is very small—a cross of only twenty-eight feet by thirty-six; but the form, the carving, and the windows are exquisitely graceful. Over the entrance, on the outside, is carved the chase of St. Hubert.

This is not only one of the most beautiful bits of ornamented Gothic architecture I ever saw, but it derives an additional beauty from the situation. It is in a garden—graceful acacias wave over it, orange trees bloom around, and roses beneath, rendering the spot quite enchanting.

Church decoration is so often accompanied with bad smells in the narrow streets of a crowded town, that the lovely, peaceful, and sweet-smelling chapel of Charles VII., at Amboise, really gains by the contrast. The whole place has been well restored, and belongs to the present king. Louis XI. lived often in this castle; and his son, Charles VIII., was born and died here. A Protestant conspiracy was carried on within these venerable walls, in 1560, during the

reign of Francis II., who was married to Mary Queen of Scots.

The scenery, during the remainder of the drive to Tours, was pretty, but not very striking. The first glimpse of the town, in the distance, very beautiful: the two towers of its fine cathedral; the long bridge, then near us on the right; the curious arches and mysterious-looking remains of Marmoutier Abbey; and, a little further on, the ruins of the old bridge, whose grey spectral arches span a branch of the river on our left, and are lost among the tall willows on a pale-green island. The colouring is certainly pale in this part of France, more so than in England, and in England more so than Ireland. I have, indeed, never seen in any country the colouring so vivid as that of the Green Isle.

Tours, Monday evening.—Hôtel du Faisan.—Just been to the cathedral, and admired its painted glass windows and the pretty monument of two children of Charles VIII. The arms of Blanche of Castille, mother of St. Louis (the Ninth) are still visible in the windows of the choir; and here that good and beautiful queen may have offered up prayers for the success of

her son's arms in Palestine. It was of this queen Shakspeare said,—

" If lusty Love should go in quest of beauty,
Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch ?
If zealous Love should go in search of virtue,
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch ?
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,
Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanch ?"

Part of the original church was burnt in 561.

" Le temple Saint Gatien sentit aussi le feu,
Mais estant secouru, n'en brusla que bien peu,"

says Olivier Cherreau, in his poetical history of the Archbishops of Tours. He says nothing, however, of what struck me as being so odd, that the church is crooked, the left wall and pillars of the nave not being in a line with the choir.

Tuesday 25th.—Expedition to Chenonçeaux.— We were nearly four hours going. The country pretty, but very tame, and the day hazy and lazy ; everything looked and felt quiet. The wind too indolent to blow, the sun to shine, or the clouds to rain. It was indeed repose, or rather stagnation ; for the green pools we constantly passed looked as if they had not moved since the creation. Before the end of our long

drive, our whole party felt the influence of this stagnation, and fell fast asleep. The road was very good, and runs, for about half of the way, along the left bank of the Loire. We had a good view of the ruins of Marmoutier Abbey, and also of the curious high tower, on the opposite bank, called "Lanterne de Rochecorbon," which leans considerably. There are stalactite grottoes under it, and curious ancient staircases cut in the rock.

After leaving the river, we had a very gentle ascent through vine-gardens bordered with fine walnut trees. Passed several pretty villages, and the town of Bleré. In one of the villages, a marriage fête was celebrating. The bride did not appear to be very young; but I believe that the women in this country soon look old, for I remarked that we seldom see anything but young girls and old women. It was a very picturesque spectacle; the whole party were dancing "rondes" in great glee, and the bright-red petticoats of the women, with the white cap and blue boddice, looked very vivid and pretty. The young men danced without coat or hat, and wore at their waistcoat buttons large bouquets of flowers, forming a good contrast to the

cocked hat and loose blue frock, which was the graver costume of the older gentlemen. The whole scene was very animated; and it had certainly escaped the contagion of laziness, which this hot day had brought on us.

When we arrived at Chenonçeaux, we were so delighted with the venerable appearance of the old castle, that all sleepiness was dispelled in a moment. It quite justifies the description given by the old poet, Loret, in his "*Voyage de la Cour a Chambord.*"

> "Basti si magnifiquement,
> Il est debout comme un géant
> Dedans le lit de la rivière,
> C'est à dire dessus un pont
> Qui porte cent toises de long,
> La reine y faisoit sa prière,
> Et le baillif de Chenonceaulx
> Estoit monsieur de Villarceaux."

Chenonçeaux is full of interesting recollections. The rooms of Catherine de Medicis, her bed, &c., are in the same state in which she occupied them. There are reliques, also, of Diane de Poitiers, and the chambre de deuil of poor Louise, the widow of Henry III., remains untouched. In it is a looking-glass which belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots. She paid a visit to

Chenonçeaux in the happy days of her youth; and there was something very touching in being thus reminded of these two fair widows of brother kings. Both began their career with every prospect of happiness. Poor Louise, ill treated by a husband she loved, perhaps found peace at last in the quiet retirement of Chenonçeaux. Mary began life more happily, but found peace only in the grave.

Many of the old pictures are very curious. There is a good one of Ninon de l'Enclos, and one of Diane de Poitiers, as Diana; also originals of Rabelais, Louis XI., and Gabrielle d'Estrées. There is, too, a good bust of Agnes Sorell, whose quaint device was $\left|\frac{A}{L}\right|$ A sur L—Agnes Surelle.

It is on record that a fête was given here, in 1577, by Catherine de Medicis to her son, Henry III. The place itself brought the scene strongly before one. What a strange mixture of profligacy and grandeur! "Le service," says the chronicler, "était fait par les plus honnêtes belles de la cour, à moitié nues," and this in the presence of the meek and guileless Louise and the imperious and haughty Catherine! Many years afterwards, Chenonçeaux ceased to be a

royal residence, and came into the possession of Madame du Pin. During this time, Rousseau was often here, and took a part in its private theatricals—then so celebrated—and has immortalized its groves in his verses.

Chenonçeaux is built *on* the river Cher; the body of the castle on a little island, or rock, which it completely covers, or rather overhangs; and the long wing extending from it (containing Catherine de Medicis' fine picture gallery) is built on six massive arches, over the main branch of the Cher. Over it, at the further end, is the theatre where Rousseau played.

Francis I. often lived there, as his numerous salamanders and initial (F) shew. But the great embellisher and heroine of it was Diane de Poitiers, who after her royal lover's (Henry II.) death, was obliged to give it up to his widow, Catherine de Medicis. It is singular, that in the chapel and other places, the two devices of these rival dames should be united—Diana's crescent and Catherine's initial, forming the following monogram.

In other places, Diana's two D's make Henry the second's H.

The sofas, toilette tables, cups, glass, china—everything, remains the same as in their time; and what is most rare, the walls are covered with the very same hangings which then adorned them. Some are of stamped leather, others of canvas, painted in large and vivid, yet dark patterns, as if to imitate tapestry. The doors are hung with tapestry, or rather worsted-work, (cross-stitch,) in flowered patterns, whose colours remain quite vivid.

Whilst I was sketching the view, which is here given, I saw a boat carried down the river—it upset just under the walls of the chapel, and totally disappeared. This shews how deep the water must be, and the current is so strong, that it seems wonderful the castle, massive as it is, has not been carried away during the many centuries that have past since it was built. It now belongs to Le Comte de Villeneuve, great-nephew of Madame Du Pin. He is proprietor also of the Castle of La Carte.

Though Chenonçeaux is so interesting from being a perfect and unaltered specimen of the manners &c. of olden time, and indeed, also from the beauty of its architecture, yet I think Diane de Poitiers made a very good exchange

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THE CASTLE OF CHENONCEAUX.

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to Chaumont. The situation of that castle on the Loire, is so much finer and more cheerful.

After our visit to the castle of Chenonçeaux, we passed some hours strolling in the gardens, and under the thick shade of the old groves in which Rousseau loved to wander. His favourite walk was "*l'Allée de Silvie,*' of which he says—

> "Qu'à m'égarer dans ces bocages
> Mon cœur goûte de volupté!
> Que je me plais sous ces ombrages!
> Que j'aime ces flots argentés."

There is a legend of an enchanter called Orfon, who is said to have exercised so much influence over the early inhabitants of Chenonçeaux, that I will relate the story. In the forest of Loches, is a barrow called the Monument of St. Nicolas—a work, no doubt, of the ancient Gauls, but the tradition of the country gives it a super-natural origin. It is said that a formidable magician, named Orfon—a prince, who owed his power to the hidden authority he exercised over nature—lived for a long time in a palace in this neighbourhood, surrounded by thick forests, and invisible to the eyes of men: he was the inheritor not only of the immense riches of the Druids, but of their super-natural knowledge also.

As avaricious as any king who was not a magician, Orfon buried in the caverns of the neighbourhood his heaps of gold, always choosing to count his wealth on the night of our Lord's nativity.

Every year there arose a terrible tempest on Christmas-eve. Furious winds swept along the immense forest of Loches, and the trees, bending to the earth under their influence, prevented all approach to the abode of the magician, and deprived the inquisitive of any desire to interrupt him in his absorbing calculations. However, as if in mockery of the misery of his poor neighbours, he who paid attention, might hear, even in the midst of the furious tempest, the sound of pieces of gold pouring down one after the other.

Even in the very churches during the solemnity of that service which celebrates the anniversary of the coming of the Divine legislator, whilst all hearts were raised to heaven, by those Christmas hymns, which bore testimony to the joy of our ancestors, the sound of gold would suddenly penetrate into the midst of the kneeling multitude, and call back their thoughts to the joys of a terrestrial and perishable world.

Jingling of money, and the fury of tempests, were the objects of Orfon's enjoyment. If any wretched man committed a theft, Orfon was sure to have been the instigator; if a young girl committed a fault, Orfon's music was the excitement. Thus he was the universal execration, and the entire neighbourhood re-echoed with exorcisms against so wicked a king.

At last, whether that his time was come, or, as has happened since to so many other princes, that he was conquered, and forced to yield to an insurrection of his people,—one night in the month of December, when the earth was covered with snow, and the cold almost insupportable, during the celebration of Christmas, instead of the usual noise of gold, suddenly a great cry was heard, and all the lights of the chapel of St. Nicholas were at once extinguished. Orfon had just expired! Orfon, buried in the vast vaults of his former residence, continued, indeed, in possession of his treasures, but had lost his accursed power, and his empire over the elements.

It is true, indeed, that every year during the solemnities of Christmas, when the hour of the nativity approaches, Orfon may still be heard groaning in the depths where the exorcisms have

bound him, and counting his innumerable piles of gold ; but it is not easy to hear him,—perhaps it is that his treasure has diminished since he is no longer permitted to employ it, or that he has some misgivings as to the corruptions of the age—certain it is, that he is much more tranquil, and that it now requires to be one of the initiated to hear him, or a man must possess a delicacy of ear, such as does not fall to the lot of every citizen of the department.

In the middle ages, however, the enchantments of Orfon reigned in full force ; and the simple peasantry of this country imagine it was the fatal sound of Orfon's treasure that destroyed, in this very province, the happiness of three of its fair and once innocent beauties—Agnes Sorel, Gabrielle d'Estrées, and Louise de la Vallière. Agnes Sorel, (whose name has become celebrated as the mistress of Charles VII.) was in the fourteenth century so enchanted with the distant sounds of Orfon's fatal coin, that she accepted a situation in the queen's household, and yet Schiller says of her :—

" Zieren würde sie,
Den ersten Thron der Welt—doch sie verschmäht ihn."

The old historian Monstrelet admired her

character so much, that he scarcely allows one to suppose there was anything wrong in the King's partiality for her. "For," says he, "people are more inclined to speak well than ill of their superiors. The affection the King shewed her, was as much for her gaiety of temper, pleasing manners, and agreeable conversation, as for her beauty. She was called the fairest of the fair, and most liberal in her alms, which she distributed among such churches as were out of repair, and to beggars." King Francis the First, wrote under a portrait of La "Gentille Agnes"—

> "Plus de louange et d'honneur tu merites,
> La cause étant de France recouvrer,
> Que ce que peut dedans un cloitre ouvrer,
> Close nonain, ou bien devot hermite."

And it seems certain that, she always instigated the King to act bravely in his defence against the English.

The influence that women have often exercised over the destinies of nations, induces some persons to imagine that their mental powers are naturally not inferior to those of men. I think, however, this influence arises, not from the superiority, but on the contrary, from the in-

feriority of their intellect. To be influenced is rather a sign of a superior intellect that can afford to bow down, and give way to the weaker sex. Obstinate, and narrow, or weak-minded men, are rarely influenced—they are, indeed, often compelled and driven—by a clever wife or mistress, but this is quite different from being influenced.

To return to Agnes Sorel: in order to escape the too-fascinating attractions of gold, and all the dangers of a court life, she is said to have retired to the castle of La Guerche, not far from this place. With all her faults, that beautiful Agnes had many redeeming qualities, and it is very possible, that she often intended to repent, and saw plainly that the court of her royal lover, with even all its honours and pleasures, was not equivalent to the peace of mind she had lost.

Tours.—Wednesday.—This old town seems full of traditions—almost every street has some name for the origin of which a wonderful story is told.

The oldest street in Tours is that of la Porte Hugon, and from this name the celebrated term of Huguenot is said to have sprung.

It would be endless to relate them all ; but one of the most remarkable is that of the Rue des Trois Pucelles, a well-authenticated local tradition, and which illustrates a great moral truth. It shews that

> " Ambition is a vulture vile,
> That feedeth on the heart of pride,
> And finds no rest when all is tried ;
> For worlds cannot confine the one,
> The other lists and bounds hath none ;
> And both subvert the mind, the state,
> Procure destruction, envy, hate."—DANIELL.

Many centuries ago, a rich and honest Jew lived in the Rue des Trois Pucelles. He had, as most rich Jews seem always to have, an only daughter, who was surpassingly beautiful, and of a pleasant and sprightly temper ; and this daughter, of course, had a lover who adored her, but who, as usual, was handsome and poor. But here the common version of such stories ends : for instead of a cruel and worldly-minded parent, who wished to sacrifice his daughter's happiness to ambition, this honest son of Israel desired nothing more than to see his darling child married to the poor young Tobias. The girl, too, loved the youth well, but she wished to see a little more of the

world, and when her father, in the kindly simplicity of his heart, proposed she should accept the offer of humble young Tobias, great was his surprise to find that she refused it.

The old Jew, however, was a sensible man: he made no remark, but simply gave her answer to Tobias, who in consequence quitted Tours in despair. Now this was more than the young Jewess intended, and he was no sooner gone than she suddenly discovered that she could not live without him, and fell into such a fit of melancholy, that her mother and most of her friends began to fear she would die. Not so the old man, he only smiled and rubbed his hands with glee. "Well," said his wife one day, bursting into tears, "I see you will never be satisfied till our poor child lies in her grave. Why will you not send a messenger for Tobias? You know she loves him, only the darling child is too proud to confess it. I was just the same at her age."

"She *is* proud," said the father, looking grave, "and ambitious too, which thank God you never were, or we should not have lived so many years happily together! She fancies all sorts of foolish things about the happiness to be

found in the splendour of courts and earthly greatness; and she would not believe a plain old-fashioned sort of man like me, or our good Rabbi either, if we preached to her by the hour, so she shall see, and judge for herself. And as she has thoughtlessly and unfeelingly rejected that good young man, who is so worthy of her love, I swear that nothing shall induce me to consent to her marriage with him, until she has received the proposals of a prince, an abbé, and a knight. If then she reject their offers, — after having seen that world which appears to her so delightful,—if she still love poor Tobias, and wish to marry him, I will gladly consent. Go and inform her of my positive conditions."

The fair Miriam heard her father's proposal with extreme surprise—it roused her, indeed, from the state of despair her own wilfulness had caused; but she had already discovered how deeply her heart was engrossed by Tobias, and her happiness wound up in his, so that she shrank with terror from the ordeal. A splendid court without the man she loved, seemed to have now no attraction; however, her father was inexorable. He swore by the God of his fathers that Tobias should never again visit the house till the

conditions were fulfilled. On the other hand, he promised to furnish her with a brilliant escort, splendid jewels, and everything requisite to shine in the luxurious courts of Paris or Bretagne, in order to facilitate the fulfilment of the conditions he had imposed.

So Miriam rose from her bed of sorrow, and attired in splendid robes, started for the court of Brittany. She was attended by twelve young damsels, brilliantly adorned with costly jewels, as many pages, and a large retinue of serving men and women.

The arrival of a strange beauty at the King of Brittany's court, caused a great sensation, and as Miriam concealed her real name, she was called "La Pucelle Inconnue."

Few weeks passed before she had a numerous host of valiant knights at her feet. Some were handsome and accomplished, and swore to adore her for ever; but none pleased her so much as the poor Tobias. The pleasures, indeed, of the court were great: a constant succession of fêtes and tournaments; but Miriam sighed for one half hour's conversation with Tobias under the trees in her father's garden, and began to think the song of birds which then accompanied their happy

talk, and which she had once almost despised as common and homely, now sounded more beautiful in memory's ear than all the martial music, or even the gay minstrel's song. But as yet only one of her father's conditions had been fulfilled, therefore, she dared not return home: many brave knights had sought her, but no prince or abbé had yet sued for her hand.

So the Jewess continued to array herself in the most splendid manner, and sought to win the applause of the young Princes of Bretagne. She was very lovely, and excelled too in many of the accomplishments of those days; therefore, before long, the King's eldest son, Prince Adelbert, swore he would marry no one but the fair stranger, and threw himself at her feet. Miriam did not at once refuse either the prince or knight, but according to her father's orders, told each separately she had made a vow not to decide for six months, but if they chose to be in a certain street in the City of Tours, on the succeeding Good-Friday, she would give her answer. They both murmured at the delay; but, seeing her resolution was unchangeable, promised to be there at the appointed time. There now only remained an abbé's heart to win,

which did not take long. So Miriam, who had become quite tired of her life of pageantry and heartless career of gaiety, returned home, wiser, perhaps, by a few months' experience of the hollow realities of that world's glitter which she had once sighed for, than, as her father remarked, if she had received endless sermons from the wisest heads. All her fear now was, that Tobias might be changed, for he had never been undeceived, and still believed her indifferent to his love. But her dear father, who was enchanted to see her again, promised to write immediately to explain everything, yet he still insisted the ceremony must not take place till her three admirers appeared at their rendezvous.

Good-Friday was fast approaching ; but now began the difficulty of the three lovers, for they had been only informed of the town, but were ignorant of the fair stranger's name.

" The Prince," says an old chronicle, " sent immediately some of his attendants to inquire in every street for the handsome noble young lady called, ' La Pucelle Inconnue.' The Abbé made the quête for his convent, from door to door, in the hope of meeting ' son amie ;' but as he took care not to beg from the Jews, he of course failed in his object. As to the Chevalier,

who, like his brotherhood, possessed more courage than wit, he contented himself with sending formal challenges to the knighthood of Touraine, who took no notice, but left him in quiet repose. Great indeed was the disappointment of these three personages.

"At length, one fine morning, each of them received a note, informing them of the street in which their researches should be made, directing also that they should go from door to door, and make whatever inquiries they thought proper, until they received the answer, 'Here I am, at your service.'

"Thereupon, the lovers were immediately on the alert. The Jewess attended them, dressed as a page, and, as it was dark, without running any risk of being recognised. At first, the Prince and Monk got on tolerably well, but at last they became fatigued. Besides, the good citizens of Tours were not always inclined to answer their foolish questions, so that all parties got angry — invectives followed, and 'La Pucelle Inconnue,' was sent to the devil five hundred thousand times. The Chevalier, indeed, as from his warlike habits might be expected, began where the others left off.

"At last, they all reached the place of rendez-

vous, though not together. The Abbé arrived first: on receiving the wished-for answer, he rushed into a large and dark apartment; and he was just beginning the recital of his disappointments, when the Prince, in his turn, arrived. He was received in the same manner, and with still greater impetuosity rushed into the house, without, however, finding what he sought for.

" He at first had some hope; but you may judge of his anger, when, instead of a graceful and delicate head, his hand lighted on a thick beard and bloated countenance. Cries of " treason! treason!" resounded through the house. The Chevalier entered at that moment, with his dagger drawn, and their cries, struggles, and explanations lasted until daylight, when all three—wounded, furious, and breathing death and vengeance—recommenced their researches in Tours.

" They continued in the same embarrassment until Easter-week, when they received a note in the same hand-writing, signed by the daughter of Israel. This letter announced to them that the maiden they sought for, was at that moment the wife of young Tobias, having preferred Metz to Tours, and a simple child of Moses to those

great ones of the earth, who, under soft words, concealed a deadly poison, and the envenomed dart, which drove mankind from the sanctuary of Eden."

Wednesday evening.—Still at Tours, and more and more pleased with the place. The girls who wait in all these inns are very nice and pretty. They are full of good humour and civility; yet they have a very hard life. One of them sits up every night; and as there are generally only three in an establishment, they have not much sleep. We are tolerably comfortable here in this hotel, but the court-yard and staircase are very dirty, and I think the Hôtel de Londres looks to be a better house.

To-day is very hot, so we did not drive out until after dinner, when we visited Plessis les Tours. But little of Louis XI.'s celebrated castle remains; it has been all destroyed except one wing of brick with stone carvings, and a winding staircase in a tower at the corner. In the garden are some remains of walls, and we descended some steps to reach the dungeon where Louis XI. confined Cardinal de la Ballue for nine years. We also saw, in a field adjoining, but at a little distance, the oratory, or little

chapel, where Louis XI. used to pray, which exactly resembles the one described in Quentin Durward. It is now used as a stable.

As we lingered among the ruins of Plessis les Tours, I thought of Monstrelet's description of its strange inhabitant. During Louis XI.'s last illness, and not long before his death, the old historian says, — "At this time the king sent for a number of musicians, who played on low-toned instruments, whom he lodged at St. Come, near to Tours. They were about six score in number, and with some shepherds from Poitou, that played on their pipes, assembled before the king's apartments, but never saw him, and there played for his amusement, and to prevent him from falling asleep. On the other hand, he collected a great many devout people of both sexes, such as hermits and others of holy lives, to pray incessantly to God that his days might be prolonged."

But prayers and musicians were alike unavailing, and on the 11th of August the king died, and having previously given orders that he should be buried at his favourite Nôtre Dame de Clery, the old church which we saw, and that forms such a fine feature in the landscape on the

opposite bank of the Loire, on the road from Orleans.

We afterwards crossed the bridge, and drove to the Abbey of Marmoutier. It was from it that Jean Sans peur, Duke of Burgundy, carried off Isabella, Queen of Bavaria. We saw the place this beautiful evening to great advantage. Its lonely and romantic position seemed to point it out as just the scene for such an enterprise. We have arranged to quit Tours to-morrow. I find that this interesting old town belonged to Mary Queen of Scots, in her own right.

CHAPTER VII.

Carriage notes from Tours to Poitiers—Antiquities of Poitiers.

Thursday, 27.—*In the Carriage.*—A fine view back on Tours, as we ascended the hill after crossing the Cher. Country very riante and luxurious, but pale and quiet-looking. The number of poplars, alders, and willows, add much here to the usual paleness of French colouring; and the walnuts, which grow in great profusion, seem also paler than in England, though very large and fine trees. Just come in sight of the pretty valley of the Indre, with the little town of Montbazon in the centre, and its old castle perched on an abrupt rock above.

Fine avenue of walnut trees nearly all the way from Montbazon to the next post, Soligny;

they smelt sweet, and gave us pleasant shade. Fields beyond, but no distant view — very flat.

Afterwards, a woody height, before we came to St. Maure (post); near which place, on the left, is Fierbois, where Jeanne d'Arc came for her sword to the tomb of a knight. And now we have got into that sort of plain and featureless country, where the most interesting and conspicuous object is the broad high road, which extends, in a white undeviating line, straight before our faces for many a dusty mile. We are fortunate, however; for the heavy rains which swelled the Loire and Cher have spared us from much dust,—that great enemy to travelling enjoyment,—and the only sensation they have left us, is the freshened smell of earth and tree; indeed, the day is quite perfect.

At Les Ormes (*post.*)—We have passed a nice-looking *terre*, belonging to M. d'Argentin; and afterwards, on a fine woody height to the left, the fine old chateau of Madame Cassin; opposite to it a pretty village, and several smaller chateaux,—a comfortable English-looking valley.

Chatelherault.—A very nice town, with a fine bridge over the Vienne—one end of which is

guarded by two ancient towers, with little quaint projecting turrets, and surmounted by pinnacles. There are pretty walks, gardens, and country-houses along the banks of the river, and a little island, covered with large trees, in the middle of it.

Chatelherault is famous for its cutlery, and, on stopping at the *poste*, we were besieged by women, who placed themselves on chairs at the sides of the carriage, and, armed with knives and scissors, held them up with pathetic entreaties to buy. We bought some, which looked, at least, very good.

I like all this country much better than the banks of the Loire. It is more clean, lively, and healthy-looking, and has none of those stagnant ditches and green ponds which rendered the scenery there so dull and uncomfortable. Here are bright fields, red and white clover, and all the varieties of green corns and grass, dotted over with very large walnut and cherry trees; then the surface of the country is much more undulating. We have now and then a good distant prospect; and old châteaux and country-houses, nestled in woods, crown most of the heights.

Poitiers.—Hôtel de France.—We passed near some woods as we approached this place, where the fine walnut and other trees put me in mind of Ariosto's description, in his "Orlando Furioso." They are, indeed, most probably the remains of that forest in whose umbrageous depths the tomb of the prophet Merlin was situated, and where Bradamante came to inquire of the fate of her lover, Ruggiero.

"Pensò al fin di tornare alla spelonca,
Dove eran l'ossa di Merlin profeta.
* * * * * *
Con questo intenzione prese il cammino,
Verso le selve prossime a Pontiero,
Dove la vocal tomba di Merlino
Era nascosa in loco alpestro e fiero."

On approaching this ancient town, the country-houses and people assumed a much more southern look. Low, broad roofs of ribbed tiles overshadow the wide open windows of the cottages; the road runs at the bottom of a winding range of grey rocks, overhung in many places with terraced gardens, and villas at the top;—on the other side, the finest wall of poplars I ever saw—river and gardens beyond. We ascended a steep hill into the town, through

narrow winding streets, containing many gateways and blind houses. By blind, I mean gable-ended, looking into gardens or courts, but having no windows towards the street. Others had iron gratings on their lower windows, with vines trailing among them, or trees peeping over the windowless walls, which gave to the ensemble a cheerful look.

After dinner, we went to the cathedral. It is a fine and peculiar building; the side aisles, nave, and transepts are all of the same height. The whole of the interior is rather low, but, owing to its continuity of breadth, has a very grand effect. We then proceeded to the church of Sainte Radegonde, which is a very ancient structure. We gratified an old woman by buying candles to burn at the shrine of the saint, which lies beneath the raised choir. Over the steps which lead down to the shrine, is a curious inscription of Anne of Austria, who made an offering to the saint on the recovery of her son. This church has no side aisles, and the east end is rounded like a Roman temple. Out nexr visit was to the church of St. Jean, the oldest in France. It is now secularized, as were numerous other churches, and has been very fitly appro-

priated to a museum for antiquities. It was built of Roman bricks, and has some Cipolino pillars near the altar, but they are now painted over. The collection is young, and does not as yet contain many things of great interest, but, with industry, it will soon become valuable. It has now some interesting remains from Château Bonnivet, of the time of Francis I. The arabesques resemble those of the staircases at Blois and Chambord, and are of fine execution; and we remarked, also, a large Roman monumental stone, which was purchased by the society, and thus fortunately saved from destruction. The letters are in a handsome, bold style; the inscription has suffered much, but it has been deciphered. It is interesting, as it shews how much refinement of feeling existed in this remote place, at the period. The inscription was as follows :—

" Claudiæ Verenillæ Claudii Vareni Consulis Filiæ Civitas Pictonum Funus Locum Statuam Monumentum Publicum Marcus Censor Pavius Legatus Augusti Pro Præces Provinciæ Aquitanicæ Consul Designatus Maritus Honore Contentus Sua Pecunia Ponendum Curavit."

The French translation is this :—

" A Claude Venerille, fille du Claudius Consul Varenus. La Cité des Pictons a voté des Funerailles, un lieu de Sepul-

ture, une Statue, un monument publique. Marcus Censor Pavius, Lieutenant de l'Empereur, Gouverneur de la Province de l'Aquitaine, Consul designé, Son mari, touché de tant d'honneur, a fait elever le monument à ses frais."

I doubt whether the translation "touché de tant d'honneur" gives the full force of the original "honore contentus."

There is here also an old Roman altar, found, I think, at Boares.

We returned by the promenade formed on the old ramparts. Much has lately been done—fine walks made, with a good jet d'eau in the centre. It forms a very good promenade—here a valuable thing, for the pavement in the streets is detestable. In the cool of the evening we and our homely guide, who, luckily for himself, has a most exalted opinion of the productive powers of his "beau pays," started for the "Pierre levée."

It lies about a mile from the hotel. We crossed the "Clan," and on the heights beyond, came to the stone. It resembles in every respect the Druid monuments which we saw in Ireland—the same form and the same inclination. It is supported by two rude stones at one end, and unites at the other with a stone, which at first I

thought formed part of it. We measured it in a rough way: it is twelve-and-a-half feet long, twelve wide, and three thick. Reichart gives it far greater dimensions: he makes it thirty feet long, and seventeen feet wide. Rabelais, whose curious portrait we saw at Chenonçeaux, to give an idea of the strength of his hero, asserts that as Pantagruel returned from his walk, he took up the stone, and walked off with it under his arm. This is a shameful interference with the exploits of Sainte Radegonde, who is said, on undoubted authority, but for what purpose does not quite appear, to have carried the large stone on her head, and the small ones in her apron.

I find that the opinion of the country people is, that the battle called that of Poitiers took place at Maupertuis, on the Rochelle road, about three leagues from Poitiers. This was confirmed by the postmaster of Croutelle, the first stage from Poitiers, who said he had sent some Englishmen there to see the field of battle. There is nothing but tradition to indicate the exact position.

On our return to the town, we again took a walk on the promenades, which are extremely beautiful: they command fine views over all the

surrounding country, and we had the enjoyment of one of the finest sunsets I ever saw.

It was at Poitiers that our Richard Cœur de Lion became reconciled to his beautiful and once fondly-loved Queen Berangaria; and here the royal pair kept Christmas, and the new year of 1196, with princely state and hospitality. It was a year of famine, and the good Queen exerted her restored influence over Richard in favour of the poor. He gave them all his superfluous wealth, and multitudes were saved from starvation.

In the time of Edward I., the Earl of Derby endeavoured to retake Poitiers from the French, who had, before the battle of Crecy, conquered many of our English possessions in France—"But," says Froissart, "it is a large, straggling city, and he could only, therefore, lay siege to it on one side, for he had not forces sufficient to surround it. He immediately made an assault; but the townsmen of the poorer sort were so numerous, though little prepared for such an attack, and defended the town so well, that the Earl's people gained nothing." Two days afterwards, however, the English were successful, and upwards of seven hundred of the

inhabitants were slain. "The Earl's people put every one to the sword—men, women, and little children. The city was instantly plundered, and was full of wealth. The army destroyed many churches, committed great waste, and would have done much more, if the Earl had not forbidden, under pain of death, that either church or house should be set on fire; for he was desirous of remaining there ten or twelve days. The army, at its departure, was so laden with the riches they had found there, that they made no account of clothes unless they were of gold and silver, or trimmed with furs."

This gives a sad picture of the humanity of our ancestors in the fourteenth century, as well as of the riches of this old town; and I thought of it to-day as we looked on the mutilated remains of Roman and Gothic antiquities.

But it was with great pleasure we recollected the conduct of our Prince Edward, at the glorious battle of Poitiers which took place some years afterwards, and what he said to his troops before the combat.

"Now, my gallant fellows, what though we be a small body when compared to the army of our enemies; do not let us be cast down on that

account, for victory does not always follow numbers, but where the Almighty God pleases to bestow it."

The manner, too, in which he treated John, King of France, who was taken prisoner that day, shewed much good feeling and generosity: "When evening was come, the Prince of Wales gave a supper in his pavilion to the King of France, and to the greater part of the princes and barons who were prisoners. The prince himself served the king's table, as well as others, with every mark of humility." He also said to his royal captive—"Dear sir, do not make a poor meal because the Almighty God has not gratified your wishes in the event of this day."

He said, too: "You have this day acquired such high renown for prowess, that you have surpassed all the best knights on your side. I do not, dear sir, say this to flatter you, for all those of our side who have seen and observed the actions of each party, have unanimously allowed this to be your due, and decree you the prize and garland for it."

Friday morning.—Fortunately, a blaze of sunshine on my bed would not allow of morning

sleep, (there were no outside blinds, nor even curtains,) and a noise of sawing a stone close under my window made me get up, though after a very bad night. I never enjoyed anything more than the early walk it enabled me to take. At six, we went to see ruins of the Amphitheatre, in the centre of the town, and almost the highest part of it. The building is very large, several vomitories are perfect, and we could make out the original entrance through what is now a farm-yard. The arena is occupied by gardens, and full of flowers and luxuriant fruit-trees; poor (not miserable) dwellings are nestled under the ancient archways. We clambered up to the top of the old wall, and there, besides the interesting remains of Roman splendour at our feet, we had a lovely view over the town and surrounding country. The morning air and fresh smell of dewy flowers—the mixture of past and present grandeur, for we overlooked many fine modern buildings—the long train of historical recollections,—all rendered the scene most interesting and delightful. Under the highest part there is a large, arched passage leading downwards—probably the entrance to the arena; this passage is decorated with some

ornamented bricks. Near the Amphitheatre are the remains of the old church of St. Nicholas, where eight fine old pillars, with a sort of Roman capital, support the oblong roof of the choir. It is now a magazine, and the effect of the vines which grow round some of its old columns is very picturesque. In some places, the old painting still remains on the roof. We then crossed the *Place*, and went to St. Ponchere: apparently a very ancient church, with one row of large pillars and round arches in the centre; its tower and exterior resemble early Norman. Afterwards, we proceeded through the Hotel de Ville, to the market-place. It was filled with beautiful fresh flowers and fruit, and picturesque groups of peasantry, some selling little cream-cheeses on green leaves, which looked and smelt very fresh and clean. In the midst of all these brilliant colours, and hubbub of teeming life, stands the venerable church of Nôtre Dame.

Its facade is crowded with grotesque figures of a barbaric period; over the three round arched entrances, the whole Bible history is sculptured, from Adam and Eve to the end. The flower-women were very anxious we should observe it

all, and pointed out some parts which were most strange: odd faces, with large heads and little arms, strangling serpents.

The interior is regular: two rows of large pillars and round arches, with an oblong choir, like those of St. Nicholas and Radegonde. The whole is very perfect, and apparently all built at the same time, except the little single transept. It contains many old altars, with most curious carved groups of scriptural figures, some as large as life, and coloured in the most grotesque manner. The men (in one group, representing our Saviour being laid in the grave,) wore a sort of broad-brimmed cocked hat, like Spanish banditti, and the women Dutch-looking dresses.

The altars in most of these churches are decorated with flowers—large geraniums, orange-trees, and cactuses, which smell delightfully, and make them appear quite like a garden.

CHAPTER VIII.

Journey from Poitiers to Angoulême—Arrival at Bourdeaux — The Castle of Blanquefort — Legend of La Dame Blanche—Antiquities of Bourdeaux.

Notes in carriage, from Poitiers to Angouléme.—Just come half way ; the most delightful weather for travelling I ever experienced. No pavé since Tours. The roads and posting, too, are excellent ; and we pass through park-like scenery, which almost makes us fancy we are not travelling, but taking a drive for pleasure in the picturesque grounds of some pretty country place. No dust —no heat—no cold, and the gentle breezes waft nothing but delicious smells. We have just ascended a little hill, which is covered with wood—very fine chesnut trees ; and now we overlook an extensive woody plain. Passed some trelliced vines. The peasants are now

busy hay-making, under large walnut and cherry trees covered with fruit.

Half-past two.—Changed horses at Ruffec; a clean and very southern-looking little town, containing several hotels, with gardens and vine-trelliced walks and arbours. We travel very fast. Yesterday, we did 103 kilometres (64 English miles and a half) in eight hours and forty minutes; which, including stops, is at the rate of eight miles the hour. Many of the posts are very short,—some only two English miles.

Very extensive view, going down into Malse, where we crossed the Charente—a sort of Warwickshire country, with red soil and fine trees, and near the bridge are some little woody islands —the water, of a clear and greenish lively colour, I thought peculiar, and much prettier than the yellow, thick Loire.

Angoulême same evening, Friday, May 28, *Hôtel de la Poste.*—Very good apartments, clean and new; the bed-room looks on a quiet garden, where, I trust, there will be no stone-sawing to wake us to-morrow morning, as we had at Poitiers. The first view we obtained of Angoulême was very imposing. It stands on a considerable height, and, with its old castle, cathedral, terraced gar-

dens, ramparts, and suburbs—which extend all the way up from the plain along the side of the hill, and round whose base winds the river Charente—forms a beautiful picture.

The last two stages, we had very gaily-dressed postillions, — white jackets with large blue sleeves, a bright-red scarf tied round the waist, and a sort of embroidered cap with a long tassel, coquettishly stuck on one side of the head. The peasant women are very handsome. They wear a large white cap of a peculiar form—square at the top, red dresses, blue aprons, and white bodices.

The cathedral here is very curious, and resembles in some measure the architecture which we call Saxon. The nave consists of three large round arches, on massive square pillars, supporting three cupolas; a pointed one supports the more oblong dome of the choir; and beyond there is a row of pillars, like those in the oldest churches at Poitiers—and, like them, it has no side aisles. On the façade, we remarked some very grotesque carving, but the figures are not so crowded or so strange-looking as those of Nôtre Dame, at Poitiers.

We were much pleased with the view from the

promenade on the ramparts. It is of great extent and fine vivid colouring, varied by dark woods on gentle heights, old castles, villages, and garden-like plains, through which the Charente winds in endless mazes, and is terminated by a very distant horizon of undulating heights. I have seldom seen a town which pleased me so much. It is so clean, so high, and commands such very extensive views in all directions —a position which affords uninterrupted and splendid sunsets and sunrises. Then it contains many fine houses, some grey with age and others quite new, and built of a stone so snowy white and in such graceful architecture, that they resemble those white piles of clouds which, on a fine summer evening, awaken all sorts of pleasant thoughts, and make us imagine they are fairy palaces rising high into the blue sky, inhabited by good and happy spirits.

It has also beautiful shady walks all round the old ramparts, and gardens on terraces sloping down the sides of the hill. It seems quite a place to live and be happy in. Not that it is so venerable or original-looking as Poitiers, for that dear old city has the accumulated interest of centuries; it stands also on a fine position, and its ramparts

command lovely prospects. But Angoulême has a greater appearance of modern comfort; its streets are wider and more drivable, it has more of present wealth and enjoyment, though less of aristocratic exclusiveness and past splendour. Angoulême appears the abode of rich merchants, and Poitiers of ancienne noblesse; and, for every-day life, the luxury of present riches, though less interesting, is more enjoyable.

The maids at these inns seem to lead really a hard life; one here, said she had not been in bed for four months! But this was nothing compared to the activity of another, who had been in bed only eighteen times during two years! Yet they look very healthy, and are full of life and gaiety. We have had here the best, indeed, to my mind, the only good bread we have tasted since we left England. The rolls at breakfast were exactly like those of a very well managed English country-house.

At a tournament in Angoulême, King John of England first saw the beautiful Isabella, heiress of the Angoumois; and though she was engaged to Hugh de Lusignan, he contrived to obtain her hand; but this marriage entailed upon him much warfare during a long time; and their son, Henry III., lost the battle of Taillebourg,

on this river Charente, in endeavouring to retain these territories in the possession of England.

Carriage.—Fine view, looking back on the town. Soon afterwards, we passed near a beautiful ruin, the Abbey de la Couronne; it has finely sculptured round arches and traceried windows.

The third stage, Barbezieux, is a nice little town, with a tolerable looking inn, situated in a pretty garden, La Boule d'Or. At Montlieu there is a fine extensive view; the prospects are generally pleasing; vines and corn growing in rows, and interspersed with fruit-trees. Some patches of the most beautiful green herb I ever saw; I cannot discover what it is.

After changing horses at Cubzac, a nice little place, with the ruins of an old castle, we passed the Dordogne by a magnificent suspension bridge; it is 1045 metres, nearly three-quarters of an English mile in length. A large two-masted vessel was sailing under it as we walked over. The eight light and transparent pillars, which support the wire-work of the suspension part, rising to a great height above the bridge, have a beautiful and aerial effect; and the solid arches under the road at each end, terminated by four obelisks, are also very graceful. As we crossed,

we admired much the extensive and beautiful views on both sides of the bridge. We are now passing numerous villas, with long shady avenues leading up to them from the road, which is covered with various carriages and diligences. Everything denotes the approach to a large and wealthy city.

Bordeaux. Hotel de Paris.—We are here, *au second*, in apartments which look over the tops of green trees in the Place Louis XVI. The first glimpse we had of this magnificent city from the height we descended, was beyond description lovely. We saw the river, with its forest of masts, and the indistinct mazes of buildings, suburb gardens, and villas,—but the near approach, or rather the internal aspect of the town, disappointed us. The houses are dark and gloomy looking, and not much appearance of grandeur or even riches met our eye during the drive to this hotel. As we drove over the bridge, we could not enjoy its fine views, owing to what appears to be the unnecessary height of its parapets; but the hotel itself is the most disappointing object of all. Our rooms are less well furnished than any we have met with in France; and the dinners also are the worst. To-day, one dish exactly resembled, in look and smell, pieces of old, dirty

beaver hat stewed in castor oil; and this was by way of vegetables—there were literally no others, except, indeed, a few plain, half-boiled, black-looking potatoes, not even so good as those we had on the coast of Clare, which, strange to say, were the worst I had ever before met with in any country. How shameful, in this land of fine vegetation, and in a dinner of five francs a head! But the good humour of the civil, accommodating *fille*, here indeed a maid of all-work, atones for many defects.

The *Place* in which the hotel is situated is very grand, the largest I ever saw, and being open, at the lower end, to the river, commands a splendid view of the crowded shipping, and of the town along its banks. which extends in a semicirle on either side. But what a pity that the centre of this grand *Place* should be only a flat expanse of yellow dust, and, like the Frederick's Platz, at Cassel, a desert in miniature! If it were laid out in flower-beds, or green alleys, or even common green grass, how much more beautiful it would be.

Tuesday, June 1st.—We went yesterday to see the cathedral. It was built by the English, and is in the florid Gothic style. The exterior is

richly ornamented, and it has two high spires. In the interior there is nothing striking, it has not much painted glass, and it has no side aisles to the nave. Its remarkable feature is a high separate tower, called " La Tour de Peyberlan," built in 1492.

St. Michael is a fine old church, with a beautiful and lofty tower, separated from the building. In going there from the cathedral, we passed through a very curious old narrow street, with verandahs and carved balconies.

Walked on Sunday morning to the Amphitheatre, through the Jardins Publics, which are very pretty; but the ruins of the Amphitheatre, called Palais Gallien, are not half so interesting as those at Poitiers, and I thought not so large or massive. The arena is filled with little, dirty streets and houses, villanous smells abound, and there is no romance or beauty about it. We passed through several fine " *Places*," as that of Tourny, Dauphine, &c., and the *Cours*, which are large, wide streets, with two rows of trees in them. These last are beautiful, and smell very sweet.

I have suffered much from head-ache since we came here, and did not feel equal to a long

rumbling drive on the pavé, but still I wished to see either the castle of La Brede, or Blanquefort, —two excursions on different sides of the town. Edward the Black Prince passed some of the latter days of his life at Blanquefort, and Montesquieu wrote his "Esprit des Lois" at the Château de la Brede. They are both about two hours' drive from Bordeaux, but that to La Brede is said to be the prettier. Now the Black Prince has by far greater attractions for me, besides it seems a much less frequented excursion. We should be able to get an excellent dinner, all the guides said, at the Restaurant of La Brede; but there was none they knew of at the little Village de Blanquefort; and its very name even does not occur in a guide-book of 570 pages, which we unluckily bought. Many of the coachmen were equally ignorant. All this decided us in its favour; and so off we went in the nicest little carriage I ever entered, calling itself a fiacre, but the only thing that betrayed its avocation was its No. 32. It appeared perfectly new both outside and in; its form, that of a Brougham, with beautiful silk linings, spring cushions, two handsome grey horses, in excellent condition, and a smart,

gentlemanlike driver—in short, our equipage was quite perfect, and so was our excursion.

We passed near the pretty villages of Le Bouscat, Brouges, and Ezzines, and on each side of the road were innumerable villas, with gardens full of standard roses and fine orange-trees in full bloom.

The Castle of Blanquefort is not situated so high as I had expected from James's description, for we certainly could not see the windings of the river from it, but we had a lovely view over the fertile plains of Bordeaux, with the striking spires of the cathedral, and the heights on the opposite bank of the river, covered with fine woods, villas, and pine-trees. The old château itself stands in a little valley below the village. How picturesque and interesting are its ancient walls! Besides having been a favourite residence of the Black Prince, Blanquefort is said to be the last place in this part of the country which held out for the English. The whole form may be perfectly traced, with the outward moat and towers. Some of the rooms even are in good preservation; the mouldings of the windows, the corbels, and ceilings

beautifully carved. We could clearly distinguish the English leopard in many places, and, I think, Prince of Wales's feathers on some parts of the walls. The stone is of a yellowish white hue, and looks so fresh and new, that one might almost fancy some of the ornaments to have but just come out of the sculptor's hand; yet the ivy, wild fig, honeysuckles, and vines which overshadow the ruined towers, and cluster in graceful festoons round the carved windows and broken staircases, give them a venerable appearance. It is, however, so very well and solidly built, that time alone could not have worked the desolation which now reigns. We heard that one of the largest houses at Blanquefort was built of stones taken from our Edward's palace.

A *proprietaire* who was dressed in the blue frock of a peasant, very civilly left his vineyard, where he and his wife were at work, to shew us the way when the road became too bad for the carriage to proceed further.

This intelligent peasant seemed so much pleased with the interest we shewed about the old castle, that I hoped he might know of some tradition relating to its occupancy by my favourite hero, Edward. We therefore asked him who had

originally built it, and whether he had ever heard of our brave Black Prince.

"No," said he, "I never knew there was such a person, but I will tell you all about the castle, and how it came to be called Blanquefort, for I love the old place as if it was my father, and often I sit and smell the roses that grow under the windows till I fancy I see the beautiful White Lady herself. Indeed, my father did see her, and I've met with many persons who have heard her sweet voice imploring the cruel Baron, her lord, to spare some of the prisoners that used to be confined in yonder tower. I could fancy it, indeed, but I never saw her water those roses with her tears, or breathe and smile them into bloom on fine mornings, as some say they have.

"All I know is, that such a person did live, for the recollection of her good deeds is fresh in the mind of every cottager for miles and miles round, though it is upwards of seven centuries since she died; and that solid tower, which has stood through all the wars with France, and against the English, is built over her grave. Before her time, there was a castle here even stronger than this one, and it was called Le

Château du Diable. No one could ever take possession of it; indeed, the stone it was built of was so hard that nothing could make the least impression on it. Some said it was inhabited by the devil himself, for not a soul ever appeared on its walls, and yet all assailants were struck down, as if by an invisible force, whenever they approached. The Chatelain du Diable, as he was called, seldom had any intercourse with his neighbours; they had always been a strange family, but the Baron Pierre was worse than any. He proposed for the hand of many a fair chatelaine, but though he offered a great dower, all the neighbouring Barons refused to give him their daughters; so he swore to run off with the most beautiful lady in all Gascony; and so he did, and even forced her parents to be present at the marriage ceremony, and they were married in the chapel within these walls.

"You may imagine the poor lady led a miserable life. She was an angel of goodness, and her whole endeavour was to mitigate the sufferings of her husband's unfortunate vassals. Instead of pining with grief at being separated from her dear parents and the young knight to whom she had been betrothed, and who had won

her love, she earnestly endeavoured to reform her husband and interest him in favour of his poor dependents and of the unfortunate prisoners he took in war. He used to torture them in the most horrible manner. But he was very anxious to have a son, and after being married three years, there seemed a prospect of the desired event. He then used his wife more gently, and to please her, he would forego the cruelties in which he delighted.

"The child was born, and a finer boy was never seen, but, instead of being grateful, he treated his poor wife much worse than ever. So the dear lady began to pine, when she found she was no use to anybody in the world; for the cruel Baron would not even allow her to educate his boy, but gave it up entirely to a fiend under the form of a priest, who was certainly in league with the devil, and who had influenced the Baron to evil all his life. At last, the beautiful chatelaine became so ill that her life was despaired of, and then her husband's heart began to soften, and he sent for all the doctors in Bordeaux, and allowed her to see her parents; but his kindness came too late. She got worse and worse, and soon died in her mother's arms.

"The baron was in despair, and as if to atone for all the mischief he had done and the misery he had caused, he invited the poor vassals, in whose welfare his wife had taken so much interest, to a great banquet—and when he went to bed that night, she appeared to him dressed in white, and thanked him for having fed his poor vassals. She said her spirit would be always near him so long as he continued to act well. So whenever any poor vassals were afflicted, the Dame Blanche used to appear to the Baron and inform him of their distress, and he always attended to her wishes. He became quite a reformed man, and this castle lost the name of Château du Diable, which it had borne for many generations, and was called Blanche Fort—the fort of La Dame Blanche—and her spirit has presided over all this part of the country ever since, for nothing can be happier than we all are, and whenever we are disposed to quarrel with our wives, we think of La Dame Blanche, and our anger is sure to be turned into kindness."

"And do you really believe that her spirit still lives in this neighbourhood?" inquired W——.

"Indeed I do," said the honest peasant,

" though our good curé says he is sure she did not die, but it was all a plan concerted with her mother, and that it was probably herself who used to appear, and by this means, influence the Baron to act with kindness to the poor."

Though I was glad to hear about the White Lady, yet the recollections of our own Black Prince, were far more interesting, and I imagined his gay-courtiers and brave warriors hunting in the beautiful woods which surround the castle.

" 'Twas near the city of renown'd Bordeaux,
This goodly company of Edward's court,
Array'd as archers came their skill to shew,
And take the pleasure of the sylvan sport.

" 'Twas in the summer when the leaves were green,
And birds were quiring in the shady boughs,
A goodly troop of knights and dames were seen,
All in a glade where deer had wont to browse,
Now scatter'd far, or hid in covert screen.

" And thus, in sport and pastime of delight,
They wiled away the pleasant busy hours,
As preparation for the Spanish fight,
Drew to the Prince his Aquitanian powers.
At morn the council, and the ball at night,
By day, the sylvan games and rural bowers."*

* Shepherd's Pedro of Castile.

As we could get no dinner at Blanquefort, we went, on our return, to the Café de Paris, and had a very good one for six francs, and some ice afterwards at a café, in the Place Tourny, by moonlight, under a fine portico filled with orange-trees in full bloom. The view was very pretty,—the lighted shops on either side of the broad *Place*, terminated by that magnificent theatre, the pride of Bordeaux.

The peasants talk a sort of Patois here, which sounds very like Spanish. The shops do not seem particularly good—very few booksellers—at one, however, I have bought several delightful-looking volumes. Guizot's and Thierry's Histories, &c., Plato's Thoughts, and the works of some other Greek philosophers, translated into French. The guide-book of this place is not good, but we got an excellent map of the Gironde.

The dress of the peasantry here is not at all picturesque; the women are by no means handsome, and they wear dingy red and yellow handkerchiefs tied round their heads, or else a very unwieldy kind of stiffened, white cap. They have enormous faces, and rather short, square figures; brown complexions, but hair and eyes not very dark; indeed, some have light blue

eyes, which, with a mahogany-coloured skin, is not pretty, and they have, too, a sickly look. At Poitiers the women were beautiful.

W—— has just returned from Mr. S——, the Consul, who has been visiting the old castle of Villandran, where Clement V. was born, between Cerons and Langons; and that of Laroquetaillade, between Langons and Bazas. He was quite delighted with their scenery, and particularly with that of the former.

Wednesday Evening. — We walked over the town to explore, and search for some traces of the old Palace of Aquitaine, the ancient residence of our English kings, and other old buildings. We found several which the long guide-book of Bordeaux does not even hint at. We went first along the quay, and saw the two remaining towers of an old castle, where Richard Cœur de Lion is said to have lived. We then proceeded to the bridge, and went through the old Porte Caillon. It leads to the Place d'Aquitaine, which contains many curious old houses.

The Bourse was here, and though now a wagon office, yet its ornamented façade shews what it once was. We met a most civil and well-

informed man at the office, who very good-naturedly and cleverly explained the locale to us. This was one of the chance pieces of good fortune which travellers sometimes meet with.

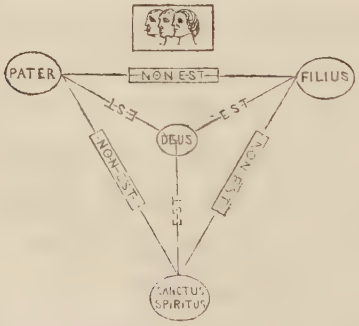
This building was the old Bourse ; but it owes its magnificence, of which we saw the remains, to Charles the Ninth. The old castle of Aquitaine stood on the site which some new houses on the opposite side of the *Place* now occupy : this was inhabited by our Richard the First, and the arms on the top of the Bourse, which seem to have had leopards for supporters, might have been of the period.

The old palace of the Dukes of Aquitaine, our English kings, seems to have been of considerable extent. Its site is now a strange mass of old grotesque houses and courts, extending some way into the Rue d'Enfer. A dark dirty street, quite worthy of its name, through which we waded, holding our noses, but looking up with great interest at the beautiful carving that was here and there to be seen, probably the debris of England's royal palace, inserted into the more humble dwellings of a later time.

Our cicerone offered to conduct us to see a curious entrance to a house, formerly the Evêché,

in the neighbourhood, an offer which we willingly accepted. It is in a very narrow, dirty street, but very curious. The entrance to the old Evêché, was highly ornamented; over the door is a quaint device, explanatory of the Trinity. The figure is a triangle, richly decorated, and over it, in a medallion, are three profiles united.

The following sketch, which I made, will give some idea or the original.



We knocked at the old door, which gave a strange unearthly sound, and a haggard head peeped out from an upper glassless window—all looked dark and mysterious. At last, the same haggard figure opened the door. Our kind friend asked for admittance, and we stumbled among wine casks, through dark passages,

which looked as if stained with blood! The woman slammed the door behind us, and disappeared. I own I felt not a little nervous, but our kind friend with the straw hat smiled under its broad brim, and pointed to another archway at the farther end of the court—so we went on and admired the strange building. In a corner of the second court was a large tower, containing a fine old winding-staircase, and some remains of beautiful carvings. It was altogether a very original and strange scene, mixed up with present misery, and some degree of luxury too, for flowers were blooming on some of the old carved balconies.

Our kind cicerone accompanied us back, through the intricate mazes of dirty courts and narrow streets, to the spot from whence we had started, where we expressed the thanks we really felt. Before we parted, he told us that he recollected to have seen the amphitheatre almost entire—and we deplored together the vandalism which could have reduced that interesting monument to its present condition. After leaving our friend, we walked on the bridge, and enjoyed the fine view, and rich sunset.

At Bordeaux, our King John was married to Isabella of Angoulême, in the year 1200; and their son, Henry III., passed much of his time here, and lived in great state with his queen, Eleanor of Provence. This Queen Eleanor was called "La Belle," and possessed great influence over her husband. She was not very popular, and one of her expeditions to Aquitaine is thus noticed by Robert of Gloucester:—

"The Queen went beyond sea, the King's brethren also,
And ever they strove the Charter to undo;
They purchased that the Pope should assoil, I wis,
Of the Oath and the Charter, and the King, and all his."

"It was ever the Queen's thought (as much as she could think)
To break the Charter by some woman's wrench;
And though Sir Edward was proved a hardy knight and good,
Yet this same Charter was little to his mood."

She was a most active lady, and, in 1254, crossed the Pyrenees, and went with her son, Edward I., to claim the hand of Eleanor of Castile. The young people were married at Burgos, and they all returned to Bordeaux, where Henry III. had prepared grand festivals for the young infanta's reception.

In her latter days, Eleanor la Belle became extremely charitable; and she shewed, too, considerable knowledge of human nature, and gave her son, Edward I., excellent advice, which is recorded in some quaint lines by Piers.

Here, too, many years afterwards, in this old palace,—which, in the thirteenth century, was probably more splendid than ever before or since,—our young king, Edward I., and his queen, Eleanora of Castile, had a wonderful escape, in 1272. They were sitting in royal state on a richly-embroidered couch, in a magnificent room, which had lately been hung with tapestry sent from the luxurious Castile,* when a violent storm came on; terrific lightning flashed through the room, and killed two knights who were standing close behind the royal pair. This Queen Eleanor was called the Faithful, for she always accompanied her warlike husband in all his campaigns; and when her ladies were endeavouring to dissuade her from going with him to Asia, on the crusade, she said, "Nothing ought to part those whom God

* This queen first introduced tapestry hangings for rooms in England.

has joined, and the way to heaven is as near, if not nearer, from Syria as from England, or my native Spain."*

* The following epitaph from her tomb is given by Miss Strickland :—

" Queen Eleanora is here interred,
A royal, virtuous dame;
Sister unto the Spanish king,
Of ancient blood and fame:
King Edward's wife, first of that name,
And Prince of Wales by right,
Whose father, Henry—just the third—
Was sure an English wight.
He craved her wife unto his son,
The Prince himself did goe
On that embassage lukily,
Himself with many moe.
This knot of linked marriage,
The King Alphonso liked;
And with his sister and this Prince
The marriage up was striked.
The dowery rich and royal was,
For such a prince most meet;
For Ponthieu was the marriage gift—
A dowery rich and great.
A woman both in concil wise,
Religious, fruitful, meek;
Who did increase her husband's friends,
And 'larged his honour eke.
Learn to die!"

Though less strikingly beautiful than her royal mother-in-law and namesake of Provence, who was surnamed La Belle, she was very lovely, as her effigy on the monument in Westminster Abbey still shews. In 1284, she went to Carnarvon Castle, and there gave birth to Edward II. I have seen the small dark room where that event took place, and also the old palace of Conway Castle, where she lived in state, and where there is a beautiful arched recess, called Queen Eleanor's Oriel .The old lines I read somewhere about it, still run in my head :—

> "In her oriel there she was,
> Closed well with royal glass,
> Filled it was with imagery,
> Every window by and by."

Those old palaces give us a favourable idea of the good taste in architecture of that age, when even a remote province—as Wales then was—possessed such splendid residences ; and, therefore, this southern palace at Bordeaux must have been far more magnificent.

The crosses erected by Edward, in memory of his beloved wife, are beautiful. I have often admired the one near Northampton, which still

remains nearly perfect; but the most exquisite is said to have been that at Charing Cross. It stood on the spot now occupied by the statue of Charles I., and the name still commemorates the affection of Edward for his faithful queen—Charing being a corruption of "Chère Reine," as the good and lovely Eleanor was always called.

It was pleasant to think of all this as we searched to-day for vestiges of the ancient royal palace of England, and we talked over the numerous kings and queens of our land who passed some of their stateliest hours amidst these old walls. Here Edward the Black Prince came after his glorious victory at Poitiers, in 1356, bringing his royal captive, John, King of France.* Some years afterwards, he visited Bordeaux with his beautiful wife, the Fair Maid of Kent; and here, in the year 1367, his son Richard was born. Froissart says, "The Prince and his whole household were very much rejoiced at the event. On the following Friday,

* Froissart says, "It is not possible to relate all the feats and entertainments which the citizens and clergy of Bordeaux made for the Prince, and with what joy they received him and the King of France." The Prince remained there all that winter, and there was much feasting and merriment.

the child was baptized at the holy font of St. Andrew's Church; the Archbishop of Bordeaux performed the ceremony." This was our unfortunate King Richard II. He is said to have been born in the little village of Sormont, not far down the river; and further on, there is a place called Richard, so named from our brave Cœur de Lion.

Soon after the birth of his son, the Black Prince agreed to assist Don Pedro to recover his kingdom of Castile from a usurping brother. The short interval of rest in the active life of the warlike Prince Edward is well described in Shepherd's Poem on Pedro, of Castile.

"The Prince of Wales, from Bourdeaux' peaceful tower,
With listless eye looks over Aquitaine;
The black chief droops within his lady's bower,
And thinks of war, and dreams of Cressy's plain;

* * * * * *

Her knights in pleasance match their falcon's speed—
Or, war's vain image, raise the hunter's cry,
Or win with idle toil a minstrel's meed,—
But still for battle breathes the secret sigh.
Stout Chandos chafes by day his fretted steed—
By night, the visionary squadrons fly;
He grasps in startled dreams a shivering spear,
And wakes with shouts of Guesclin in his ear."

Soon their wishes are gratified; Don Pedro and his beautiful wife come to implore for aid, and then—

> "Within a week, the town of old Bordeaux
> Beheld the royal pair; a gallant show
> Of knights and ladies issued from the gate,
> To give them welcome with becoming state;
> And thus the noble heir of England's throne
> Received the monarch who had lost his own."

CHAPTER IX.

Journey through Les Landes—Mont de Marsan—Beautiful scenery approaching Bayonne—Historical recollections of our early English kings.

Thursday, June 3. *In the carriage, on the road to Bayonne.*—The country through which we have passed since we left Bordeaux is pretty, but we saw nothing remarkable till we had passed Castres, the second post, and then came in view the old castle and village of Langoiran, on the other side of the Garonne.

At Cerons there is a large castle, rather old, and a good view of the opposite bank of the river,—which is high and steep, and covered with vines and wood,—with here and there the ruins of old castles on projecting heights, and modern villas below.

Just passed through Barsac, where there is a respectable-looking chateau, and where our post-

boy wanted us to stop to get "quelques bouteilles de vin blanc." Enclosed vineyards seemed to announce wine of superior quality. Just before entering the small town, there is a good-looking maison de campagne on the right. On the opposite side of the river, St. Croix du Mont has an old castle in a fine position.

We crossed the river Ciron, a tributary of the Garonne. Before we reach Preignac is the turn-off for Villandran, whose ruined castle Mr. S—— describes as well worthy of a visit. At Langon,—which is a small town, with, I believe, a tolerable inn,—the road leaves the neighbourhood of the Garonne, and turns south to Bazas. Langon is the ancient Alingo, where Paulinus, the celebrated Christian convert, the friend of Ansonius, had a property. He was afterwards Bishop of Nola, in the year 408, and died in 431. Before he devoted his life to religion, he was a scholar and a poet, a man of large fortune, and high in office, having been raised to the consulate in 378. He had large estates in Spain, Gaul, and Italy; amongst others, a large property in Alingo (Langon). It was curious, that just as we were driving through the town I was reading his Memoirs in the first

number of the " Actes de l'Academie Royale de Bordeaux."

The next post, Bazas, is beautifully situated, with a highly decorated Gothic church upon a height, and an old convent in a garden, which we passed on entering the town. We had pavé to it from Langon, and the road is lined with poplars.

About forty minutes' drive from Bazas, an extensive view over the Pines of the Landes. We again passed the Ciron, near a pretty mill, and soon after entered a fir wood. From Captieux, sandy heath and scattered trees, with houses rather resembling Swiss cottages.

And now we have fairly entered Les Landes, and I have admired the flat interminable plain, and smiled to think how some people would laugh at me for doing so. I am lucky to be able to admire most things in their way ; for my internal sensations not being pleasant, it is fortunate to be able to derive enjoyment from external objects in all their varieties. People who have more spirit of inward enjoyment, are often less pleased by what they see, hear, or read.

Very park-like scenery ; fine expanse of forest. We had an opportunity of forming some

idea of its great extent, as the road occasionally passes over some gentle heights.

Roquefort, famous for its cheeses, is a pretty little town on an abrupt height over a winding, narrow ravine, which is crossed by a bridge. The ruined fortifications round its walls are very picturesque. On leaving, we crossed a tributary of the Adour, and ascended a hill—the road winding round the town in a picturesque manner. There are some fine trees in these Landes, particularly chesnut and oak.

The little Swiss cottage-like post-house of Caloy, at which we are now changing horses, is overshadowed by a splendid oak. We met many peasants carrying gracefully-shaped water-pots on their heads, and their dresses of vivid colours have a very good effect.

I understood that, poor as the country is, the peasantry of the Landes are generally wealthy. Their fir-forests are a source of wealth, producing planks, resin, tar, &c. Until lately, this timber was used abundantly for the production of gas; but the market is now greatly fallen off, from other materials being employed, probably coals. The practice of bleeding the trees for resin, disfigures them sadly. The language is a patois resembling Gascon; and here we saw a

cloth cap in use exactly resembling the Lowland Scotch cap—generally brown cloth, but blue is seen also; with this cap, whose acquaintance was here begun, we were destined to become very familiar; it is universally worn in the Basque Provinces and by the Bearnois.

Here we left the department of La Gironde, and entered that of Les Landes. Beyond the Traverses, there occurs a very pretty bit of park-like scenery. Fine trees—oak, elm, and chesnut; the latter frequently growing singly in the corn-fields.

Too hot and dusty, and pavé too jolting to write many impressions of this long day's journey, and now I scarcely remember what they were; but the feelings they have left are very pleasant.

Friday, 4th. Carriage. — Slept last night at Mont de Marsan, and found the Hotel des Ambassadeurs far better than we expected—a nice old rambling house, with half-defaced paintings of Louis XIV.'s time over the doors, and sprawling shepherdesses and swains languishing in pale decay over the chimney-pieces. A profusion of sweet heliotrope and flowered creepers covering the walls of its court-yard, and the upper windows curtained by jasmines and roses.

In this combination of ancient art and present blooming nature we slept comfortably, and after an excellent breakfast, and some Paté de fois de canard, for which Mont-Marsan is celebrated, we resumed our journey at half-past eight.

We were also pleased with the look of the town. It is situated, like many in the Landes, on an abrupt height, which overhangs a narrow, winding ravine, and has various bridges, old and new, over the little river that runs at the bottom.

An avenue of large plane-trees led us from the town; and we are passing through a fine forest, with now and then corn-fields and vines to break the wild and sylvan scene. The cottages I admired much. Their overhanging roofs of red tile, white walls of mud and timber, and the open sort of rustic portico in front, look southern and luxurious.

The peasantry, too, are a much finer race than near Bordeaux, and the dress far more picturesque. We often meet carts drawn by white oxen with sheep skins over their heads, looking like those I have often seen on ancient bas-reliefs. The rye is very forward—we saw one field already cut; but the hay harvest is only beginning.

Changing horses at the pretty little town of

Tartas. The post-house is an old church, and has a primitive clock-bell over it, which has just struck eleven twice, with a beautiful venerable-sounding tone.

A steep descent leads down to the river before us, and I see the road winding up the other side, through the rustic buildings, and can trace it afterwards for some distance in the woods beyond. It all looks and feels peaceful, and the prospect of a shady forest drive, where the smells are delicious, is very pleasant.

Four o'clock.—Something happened to one of the wheels, and we were obliged to stop for some time. We came here at a foot's pace, and found a fair going on in this little village; and the maimed carriage (in which I am writing,) is surrounded by numbers of peasants, and some soldiers, staring at every part of it.

The women in broad-brimmed straw hats, which serve also as umbrellas, and men in blue or brown caps, like Scotch bonnets. The goods selling in stalls are chiefly crockery, or rather earthenware, which is very pretty: pans of every variety of shape and colour, pale-green, buff, red of every shade, and umber. The other goods are the broad-brimmed hats, (one of which

I think I ought to buy,) nails, dried fish, and ropes. The people look gay and kind-hearted, and very anxious about the operation our wheel is undergoing, and probably rather wondering at my writing so unconcernedly all the time. Few of the windows are glazed, but they have all green shutters; the little "Hôtel des Voyageurs," can boast of only one glazed window.

Before the present fine Chaussée was made—one permanent advantage at least of Napoleon's expedition into Spain—the sand was here so deep as to make travelling very tedious; my informant, an old postillion, told me that with eight horses our carriage could hardly have been dragged along; now the malle de poste does the distance between Bayonne and Mont de Marsan in six hours—98 kilometres, 61¼ English miles; upwards of 10 miles the hour.

Bayonne.—Evening.—Hôtel St. Etienne.—The last three hours of our drive was through very lovely scenery. The Pyrenees were but dimly visible in the distant haze; but here and there a blue summit peeped above the light clouds, and still further, a snow-capped peak glistened through them. There was something in these mysterious outlines which enchanted me, even

more than if we had obtained a clear and uninterrupted view of our new friends—friends I trust they will be, for I know of nothing in inanimate nature to which we get so much attached as mountains. We soon learn their forms and names by heart.

Then the distinct and near views were beautiful—the sea, the Bay of Biscay was on our right, bounding a woody plain, and on each side of the road, the plane, the tulip, and cork-tree frequently occur, telling of new regions, and southern lands; and vines, treliced over whole fields, form an umbrageous roof to Indian corn, which grows beneath. Then we passed by little clear lakes, and dells, and abrupt heights, and scenes which suddenly transferred us in imagination to an old English park, with its giant oaks and lordly fern, looking wild, yet so aristocratic, that we gazed through a break in the forest, almost expecting to see the old manor house: but a distant mountain appeared instead, and the eye travelled far over vine-clad plains; and Spanish-featured peasants, carts drawn by oxen, and the smell of wild heliotrope, told us that we were far south.

And in this town everything tells that we are very near Spain. The shops, the hotels, have

Spanish as well as French signs, and the old arcades and highly-ornamented houses have quite a Spanish air. The low, old-fashioned arcades, the dress and look of the people—the language, all announce a frontier town.

After a visit to our consul here, Mr. H——, and making inquiries, we started in a most jolting kind of cabriolet to look out for a house at Biaritts, where we intend to remain some time for the advantage of sea-bathing. It turned out a more attractive looking-place than I expected. There is a noble expanse of sea, and some warm-baths have been lately constructed. We saw a great number of houses; and at length fixed upon one near the Vieux Port, Madame Espernon, proprietaire, where we shall be "grandement logés," but oddly. Our landlady assured us she contrived to stow away eighteen persons in it last year. The houses are singularly placed, and the interior arrangements of the greatest number far from attractive. We did not get back till six o'clock.

We started this morning to visit the Cimetière Anglaise, and had much difficulty to find it, owing to being misinformed as to the place. We thought it lay in the valley beneath the fortress; but after continuing for some time along

the road, a peasant told us we were quite wrong, and that we must return to Saint Esprit, and take the Paris road: instead of doing so, we ascended the height beneath the citadel, and as the morning was clear and delightful, we had an opportunity of seeing the beautiful environs of Bayonne, and the fine chain of mountains, which seem to bound the broken and varied basin where the town lies.

The town is of small extent; but, as in most fortified places, the houses are built very close to each other. It lies at the point where the Nive falls into the Adour, and consists of three divisions. Saint Esprit, lying below the citadel on the right bank of the Adour, is connected by a bridge of boats with La Petite Bayonne, which occupies the tongue of land between the two rivers. Three bridges, one of them a suspension bridge, connect it with La Grande Bayonne: in the latter is the cathedral, which, though its dilapidated tower, with a slated roof, is far from what it ought to be, still has a fine effect, and so has the Château Vieux. The military hospital, the Château Neuf, and the arsenal, said to be worth seeing, are in La Petite Bayonne. I heard the population stated at

23,000. The view from the glacis of the citadel is very fine. The Pic du Midi and La Maladetta are said to be visible from it, but we did not see them

Our way continued round the citadel, until we came near the Paris road, where additional fortifications, on an extensive scale, are carrying on. The object is, to erect higher works in front of the citadel, which is here much exposed; and I afterwards heard that it is the intention to raise Bayonne to a fortress of the first class; to do so will be the work of years.

Having reached the Paris road, a little beyond the office of l'Octroi, we turned to the left, and got into a pleasant lane, shaded with trees. We then reached a nice campagne, which belongs, I heard, to M. Gomez, a Jew. From a point near it, there is a charming view in every direction, particularly towards the mouth of the river, and the high land on the left bank studded with villas. Had we turned to the right, through a farm opposite to M. Gomez's villa, we should have saved ourselves much time and trouble; but a girl sent us considerably further along the road, till we came to its termination, at the bottom of a steep hill, near the river. Here, on inquiring at a farm-house, we discovered our

mistake, and a girl came to set us right, without whose assistance we should certainly have had great difficulty to find the place.

The Cimetière Anglaise lies near the bottom of a ravine, covered with oaks ; a very wild sequestered spot. The Consul told me, that in the enclosure there once stood an old tree which had been struck by a ball, which still remained in the tree : this circumstance would have told the tale of death admirably ; but unfortunately the tree no longer exists. It was probably removed to make way for the present arrangement, which is as common-place as four high walls and some twenty or thirty poplars can make it.

The space allotted to the memory of those brave fellows, whose lives were so uselessly sacrificed, is about fifty feet square. Some steps fixed in the wall, lead to the interior ; near these steps is a tablet, with the following inscription :—" Burial-place of British Officers, especially of the Coldstream Guards, who fell in action near to this spot, on the 14th of April, 1814. The night of the sortie from the citadel of Bayonne." This, as I have said, was a useless expenditure of life, to a melancholy extent. I believe the treaty of Paris was already signed,

and consequently the blockade was but carelessly kept up.

On that night, whilst the officer who commanded the pickets was taking a bottle of sherry with a brother officer, a deserter came in, who informed them of the intended sortie ; the man, probably without much credit being given to him, was forwarded to head quarters. The French account is, that the disappearance of the deserter was perceived, and that the sortie was hastened in consequence. The result was, that the British were taken by surprise, and the whole affair fell upon the pickets. Support was not sent with sufficient promptitude, or the French might have been cut off. As it was, they succeeded in driving the British from the position they occupied, which the French kept during the night ; but attempted nothing further. The next morning they were driven in ; and this affair, not creditable to either party, cost the French upwards of 1000 men, and the British 3000 and a great number of officers. Sir John Hope was made prisoner.

We got home much quicker than we went, and after a very agreeable walk, arrived at the hotel in half a hour. After breakfast, we lounged

about this interesting old town, and its low, uncouth arcades, which are dirty, curious, and useful. We then ascended the tower of the cathedral, and had a very fine view over Bayonne, and of the chain of Pyrenees, with which we hope to become better acquainted! At this end, La Rhune—between four and five thousand feet high (800 toises)—and Les Quatre Colonnes, are the most conspicuous mountains.

The interior of the church is handsome, the architecture of the windows curious, like the circles of a girandole. I copied one of those at the west end of the aisles. The church has a very lofty nave, with two ranges of highly ornamented windows. The arms of England on the roof, shew that it was built during the reigns of our early English kings. It has two side aisles, inconsiderable in height, with a range of chapels on the north side, but none on the south, owing probably to the cloisters, which adjoin the church on that side.

While I was drawing, a good-looking portly priest came up to us: he had excellent manners, talked much of England, and expressed his joy at the manifestations now making of the return of the English to the bosom of the church,

which he had no doubt would be accomplished, and which he said was the object of their daily prayers.

We then bought some flowers in the Marché, the small and dirty "Place," near the church. On the west side, is another small place, where a sarcophagus has been erected, with a *rather* liberal inscription. After a fine panegyric on a tailor and an Etudiant de Médécine, qui "Succomberent glorieusement à Paris, le 29 Juillet, 1830, pour la defense de nos droits, et le triomphe de la liberté," it ends by the following maxim :—

> "Les revolutions justes
> Sont le chatiment
> Des mauvais rois."

After the inspection of some shops, and the purchase of some cakes from one in the arcade for our expedition to-morrow, we made an excursion into Petite Bayonne, which has, I think, cleaner streets than the other; we got out of the town near the Château Neuf, and, from a height on the road to St. Jean Pied du Port, had a beautiful view of the rich country towards the mountains, the course of the Nive, and the range of mountains beyond.

In this direction lies Cambo, about three leagues from Bayonne — a mineral watering-place, worth a visit. We met a civil man here, who told us that the works of the fortress are to be greatly strengthened on this side also. We returned home to our excellent dinner at four, after a very agreeable walk.

Yesterday we went and heard mass in the old church. It is pleasant to see the arms of England still adorning the ceiling of the cathedral, and to think of the numerous kings of our land who have in different centuries sojourned here.

Richard Cœur de Lion, when Count of Poitou, came here in 1177, and went to a splendid tournament, given by Sancho the Strong, King of Navarre, at Pampeluna. It was there our brave king first saw the beautiful Berengaria, Sancho's sister, and was so captivated by her loveliness, that he broke his engagement with Alice of France, and never rested till he had obtained her hand. Richard was obliged to wait many years; but as soon as he became King of England, he sent his mother, Eleanor, to the court of Navarre. And here that imperious dame must have come on her road to

Pampeluna, and soon returned with the fair Berengaria, whom she had obtained for her son. These royal dames, no doubt, came to make their devotion in this old cathedral, and were nobly entertained by the bishop, in his palace, which adjoins. This same bishop afterwards pronounced the marriage benediction on the valiant Richard and fair Berengaria in the Isle of Cyprus, in 1191. An old chronicler thus describes it:—

> "To Limoussa the lady was led,
> His feast the king did cry,
> Berengère will be wed,
> And sojourn thereby
> The third day of the feast;
> Bishop Bernard, of Bayonne,
> Newed oft the geste—
> To the Queen he gave the crown."

Here, two centuries later, came a fair descendant of old Queen Eleanor's, Princess Joanna of England, daughter to Edward III. It was in 1348 she came to wed Don Pedro, of Castile, afterwards called the Cruel. Her beauty and grace have been sung by many a minstrel; she was escorted here by all the wealthiest citizens of Bordeaux, and in this cathedral the marriage ceremony was to be performed. I can imagine

this old building gorgeously adorned, and the Spanish Prince impatiently awaiting the arrival of his lovely bride — the streets hung with tapestry, and all the splendour of Spain exhibited on the occasion. The cortège approaches the city, and the trembling Joanna, who was only fifteen years of age, meets her royal lover. They are delighted with each other, for Don Pedro was a handsome and accomplished prince, and no traces of those violent passions afterwards imputed to him, could then be traced on his noble countenance. They pass through the town amid the exclamations of multitudes, and Joanna beholds the beautiful cathedral, where on the morrow her fate is to be sealed; never had she appeared more lovely, the glow of joy beaming in her eyes, and heightening the colour on her cheeks. They enter the Bishop's palace, and after a splendid banquet, the Princess retires to rest. From that richly-embroidered bed of state, which it had been the pride of many a Spanish lady to prepare for her, she never rose again! A fearful plague called the Black Death, at that time ravaged Europe, and, on the morning of her bridal day, seized the beautiful Joanna. Vain was the skill of medicine, vain

the tears and prayers of the distracted bridegroom—before the hour appointed for the joyful nuptials, she was dead!

Soon after a mournful cortège approaches the cathedral, the King of Castile and his miserable son follow, with slow and solemn steps. They place the body of that fair English Princess near the altar where the nuptial roses still bloom. But the song of joy was turned to woe, and the grave closed over the remains of her who, twelve short hours before, had gazed on these walls full of joyful expectation of a long, blissful future.

Saturday.—The promenades by the river side are beautiful; and last night we walked all through the town, over the two bridges, and upon the ramparts of the fortress at the other side. They command a most splendid view over a great extent and variety of country. We looked on the town and rivers beneath, and could see the windings of the broad and united streams as far as the ocean, on our right: before us was the coast of Spain, stretching far away into the distant horizon; and, on our left, the Pyrenees. Then the town itself, with its numerous bridges and old buildings, surmounted by the fine cathedral, which

stands on a height—the junction of two broad rivers (the Adour and Gave) in its centre,—the woody country beyond, with many graceful villaed heights and fertile plains, which occupy the space between the town and the far-off Pyrenees; all this formed a succession of pictures too varied and numerous for description,—but lovely in the extreme.

Tuesday, *June* 8.—Still at Bayonne, and more delighted with it every day. Splendid panorama from the summit of the cathedral tower, which we again ascended to-day. The mountains were all clear, and the sea beautifully blue. Explored afterwards the oldest part of the town, and the curious old arcade by the river, shut in with canvas. We then walked out on the road to St. Jean Pied de Port, and went into the fields beyond the rope-walk, where we found one of the most lovely views imaginable, terminated by the heights near Cambo and mountain range. All the walks and drives round the town, in every direction, are interesting and beautiful.

CHAPTER X.

Excursion into Spain—St. Sebastian—The River Bidasoa—Fine scenery—Irun and its church—Hernani—Independence of the Basques.

Biaritts, Saturday, 11th.—Since I last wrote, we have been in Spain! I find that, as great beauty of scenery seems to paralyse my powers of sketching, so great interest in a subject interferes with description. On approaching the Pyrenees, in walking in the beautiful environs of Bayonne, I never took out my sketch-book; and during those three most delightful days of our excursion to St. Sebastian, I could scarcely note down any of the various charming impressions left on my mind. We were very fortunate in every respect. My first trial of travelling by diligence proved more satisfactory than I expected. The greatest disadvantage of

it was, the extreme roughness of the carriage, and the rate of travelling over some of the most uneven pavements I ever saw—not the slightest regard for dips or inequalities,—to write or draw when in motion was impossible. The roads in some places, however, were excellent—bordered sometimes by large coping stones, and sometimes by raised trottoirs with parapet walls.

We decided to make our little expedition into Spain by the diligence, and had every reason to rejoice at our decision; so far as our experience goes, it confirms what I have heard, that the diligence is the only comfortable way of travelling in Spain.

We started exactly at six, with a most talkative and obliging *conducteur*. W——, Frisk, and I occupied the coupé. We thought of having my maid with us; but we were too crowded to be comfortable, and therefore transferred her to a place in the body of the vehicle, and thus, with our courier on the roof, we made an excellent journey. The road to the French frontier (the Bidasoa) is excellent, nothing can be better kept. The material used seemed a hard limestone; heaps of it, small and evenly broken, were ready for repair; the roads scraped, hedges

trimmed—in short, the most minute attention paid by the numerous cantonniers employed.

Before we reached the first stage, (Baidar,) which we did in an hour, we ascended, having the sea at some little distance on the right, and came to a lake separated by a narrow range of sand-hills from the sea. Is this the Duck Lake Inglis speaks of? From Baidar we had a steep and long descent, with a fine view of the mountains: La Rhune (Larrun) shewing its table height, and, more to the west, the bold and rocky summit of Les Quatre Colonnes, or, as it is sometimes called, les Trois Couronnes.

Guetter, and the country round, is scattered over with excellent farm-houses, built something like the Swiss. The timbers, of which the walls are partly composed, are painted black, while the rest is white-washed, so they looked very neat. We changed horses at Baidar, in about two minutes, and coachman also; each drives his own team, which, though inferior to post horses, went very well.

St. John de Luz is a very curious old place, in a charming position, but liable to encroachments from the sea, to which its decadence is attributed. Its population, in 1718, was 4800;

now, not more than half that number. The fisheries were then the source of wealth with all the towns on the coast, but they have now much fallen off.

St. Jean de Luz was the place where the marriage of Louis XIV. with the daughter of Philippe IV., Marie Therèse, took place. The house is pointed out where he lived, at the corner of the "Place." We crossed a narrow arm of the sea by a wooden bridge, and afterwards the Nivelle. From the bridge, we ascended through the rough and very narrow street of a faubourg, called Ciboure; where numerous gipsies (the gitanos of Spain) are to be found.

Before reaching Urrunge, we came to the old Château de Urtubi, which seems kept up quite in its antique state; and, according to the conducteur, is a "très belle propriété." It appears well worth seeing, and has considerable historical interest, as the place of interview between Louis XI. and the Kings of Arragon and Castile, in 1462. Of this interview, and the romantic legend connected with the castle, I will say more on our return. Urrunge was, in former days, celebrated for the contests between two factions, with the comical designations of Sabel-

chouri (Ventres-blancs) and Sabel-gorri (Ventres-rouges).

Soon afterwards we reached Behobie, a small place on the French side of the Bidasoa. Here our passports were viséd, and, whilst our courier was arranging about them, we walked on the bridge. I believe the passage of the river, in 1814, was effected some distance below, nearer to Fontarabia, which is built at the mouth of the river, and was a fortress of some importance; but now, I understand, fallen away. It has some old houses, the remains of an ancient Moorish palace, re-built by the Emperor Charles V.; and a church, well worthy of a visit.

Its French neighbour, Hendaie, on the opposite side of the river, and Fontarabia—" ont péri," as M. Morel, in his description of Bayonne, says, " l'une par l'autre." In 1793, the Spaniards destroyed Hendaie by a bombardment from Fontarabia; and, in the year following, the revolutionary army of France returned the compliment. Neither town recovered.

From the bridge of the Bidasoa, we saw close to us the miserable remains of the once celebrated " Isle des Faisans." What a falling off!

—it is now a narrow strip of ground, on which a cow was feeding; much of the earth has been removed by the peasants; the river does its work also; so that in a few years it will have totally disappeared. And yet, in the days of its glory, what a fine place it must have been! Cardinal Mazarin, and the Spanish minister, Louis de Haro, here negotiated the marriage of Louis XIV. to the daughter of Philip IV.: a magnificent pavilion was then erected on the island, and bridges connected it with the shore on either side. Afterwards Philip and Louis met here.

During the delay occasioned by an examination of passengers and packages at the Custom House, W—— and I crossed the bridge, and strolled along the road on the Spanish side of the Bidasoa. Besides the delight of feeling that we were in Spain, we were surrounded with interesting memorials of historical events; and I hurried on to an elevation which commanded a view of the once celebrated old town of Fontarabia, to make the sketch which forms the frontispiece of this volume.

This spot seems, from the earliest to the latest times, to have been peculiarly consecrated

to war. Here Roland passed with his brave paladins :—

> " Ah ! for a blast of that same horn,
> On Fontarabian echoes borne,
> That to King Charles did come ;
> When Roland brave, and Olivier,
> And every paladin and peer,
> On Roncesvalles died."

Our nimble conducteur, who runs about his lumbering charge like a cat, soon joined us, and we entered Spain. The height above the river, with its church (St. Martial ?) was the main position of the British at the battle of Bidasoa.

Irun is a very interesting old place ; we stopped to breakfast there, and made an excellent meal under the auspices of a very pretty Spanish " moza ;" so that our first trial of a Spanish posada gave us a most favourable impression. The decorations of the houses and beautiful carving of the projecting balconies announce a splendour which no longer exists ; and in the " Plaza" there is a fine old column, on which the arms of Charles V. are inscribed. I tried to take the view from that spot, but was soon ordered to desist by some Spanish soldiers. We then went to the church, which is very striking,

particularly under the circumstances in which we saw it. It is of considerable size, and of a mixed architecture, half Gothic, half Roman: its groined roof is supported by four massive pillars. The altar is very fine—its ornaments occupy the entire end of the church, and reach to the ceiling, and the whole is richly gilt. Mass was celebrating; no chairs or divisions encumbered the floor, which made the congregation in the dim light more striking. It consisted almost entirely of women, dressed in black, with their mantillas; they were grouped in lines of five or six, and knelt upright, with small tapers burning on the floor before them; their immovable figures, apparently absorbed in devotion, gave a peculiar solemnity to the scene.

The narrow street of Irun is very steep, and so miserably paved, that we blessed our stars we were not induced to take our carriage; it would have fallen in the struggle. Irun (the *I run* of electioneering jokes) was one of the remarkable scenes of the late war; indeed, all the country through which we passed has an additional interest from the same cause.

At Ouyarzon is a fort built by the Spanish Legion; before we reached it, the scenery is

very fine, and the road very hilly, through defiles covered with fern. The rocky height of the Trois Couronnes still continues to be the leading feature among the mountains: we continued ascending and descending, and thus reached Astigarraga, which was the head-quarters of the Carlists, we then came to Hernani, so celebrated during the war; the Fort St. Barbara, on a very steep hill near it, was built by the English under Evans, and is still kept up.

We were much struck with the noble air of every peasant we saw, and their majestic bearing reminded me of what I lately read in Lord C——'s interesting work. He says—"When, formerly, I crossed the frontier of the Basque Provinces, I felt myself at once in a free land, amid a race of men possessing and deserving freedom. The erect, not haughty carriage, the buoyant step, the frank and manly, yet respectful greeting, and the whole bearing, spoke of liberty long enjoyed, well understood, and not abused."*

* He says, in another place—"Every Biscayan is noble, and is acknowledged as such by the law in every province in Spain. A perfect equality of civil rights prevails in Biscay.

"The house of the Biscayan is his castle, in the most em-

Sketched by Lady Chatterton and drawn on stone by Bichebois

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This consciousness of their nobility, and the peculiar feeling it produces on the minds of the Basques, is shewn by an anecdote I heard of a peasant in the little village of Astigarraga.

It was a lowering afternoon, when a traveller—a rich Andalusian merchant,—returning from the completion of an enterprise which had brought a plentifully golden harvest into his coffers, arrived at an inn at Astigarraga. The very best that the house afforded was ordered for his repast; but our luxurious traveller was not dependent for refreshment upon such chance fare as could be procured on the road; his own baggage contained an ample store of dainty cates

phatic sense of the word. No magistrate can violate that sanctuary; no execution can be put into it, nor can his arms or his horse be seized; he cannot be arrested for debt, or subjected to imprisonment upon any pretext whatever, without a previous summons to appear under the old tree of Guernica, where he is acquainted with the offence imputed to him, and called upon for his defence; he is then discharged on the spot, or bailed, or committed, according to the crime imputed to him. This, the most glorious privilege that freemen can possess — this, the most effectual safeguard against the wanton abuse of power—this, a custom more determinately in favour of the subject than even our own cherished habeas corpus, was enjoyed by the Basques for centuries before that far-famed guarantee of British liberty had existence in our islands."

and choice wines wherewith to supply all deficiencies.

The merchant had not completed his savoury meal, when the rain began to descend. The evening looked black and threatening, but he was obliged to proceed; and summoning the landlord, he desired him to provide a guide and to order out the mules forthwith. The latter were soon at the door, and before many minutes the guide too had made his appearance. He wore the high, conical hat of the country—his thread-bare cloak, which was gracefully thrown around him, but partially concealed the jacket beneath, whose embroidery of stamped leather was evidently the worse for wear; but the lofty bearing of the man shewed a nobility of nature far superior to outward ornament, an opinion in which it was clear the man himself entirely participated.

The merchant proceeded to prepare himself for the road, and some little time did it take before his fat, comfortable person was encased in a pile of cloaks, mantles, and furs enough to render it impervious to the most untoward elements. At last, being duly packed up, and established on a mule, as well fed and well

covered as his wealthy master, the little procession moved off.

The rain continued to pour on in drenching torrents. The merchant, after jogging along for some time, suddenly woke up out of a nap into which he had been soothed by the effects of a luxurious dinner, and by the warmth and comfort of his present position. He put his head out of his snug nest of cloaks, and his eyes fell upon his guide. The young man was drenched to the skin; indeed, it would not have taken much to penetrate his scanty garments. His broad-brimmed hat, however, was perched on the side of his head with the same air as before; and he walked on, beside the traveller's mule, with his usual haughty carriage, evincing conscious dignity in every movement.

The good-natured little merchant was touched by the dripping figure beside him. He drew a contrast between his own wealthy, successful, and luxurious condition, and that of his ill-fed, half-clad, and penniless guide. At last, these thoughts so worked within him, that he could not avoid breaking out into a compassionate exclamation:—

"My poor friend, how wet you are! and

how lean and thinly clad! I do, indeed, pity you!"

"Pity *me!*" exclaimed the guide, erecting his stately figure to its full height, while every vein swelled with the proud blood of the Zurias —"Pity *me!* a noble Biscayan!" and, his dark eyes flashing haughtily, he darted a look of supreme scorn at the clod of plebeian earth enveloped in its costly coverings. "It is I who pity you, sir merchant," he cried; "for I am a noble!"

At Hernani we left the Tolosa road, and turned to the left, towards St. Sebastian. A new road is said to be in contemplation, direct from Irun to St. Sebastian, passing up the valley, which would lead by Passages, be almost level, and shorten the distance two hours. Near Oriamendi is another fort, which was abandoned by the English; and near it, the scene of action of the 5th of May, 1837, where the allies, though superior in numbers, and strongly posted, were defeated by the Carlists. I heard, that had it not been for the firing from the steamer—I think the "Phœnix," under the direction of Lord John Hay, —the British would have hardly regained St. Sebastian: as it was, their loss is said to have been

very great—nearly two thousand men, and sixty five officers. Lord John Hay was much liked; he and his brave detachment supported the British reputation, and greatly contributed to the success of the war.

After passing Hernani, the view back on the little town is very picturesque. The country becomes less interesting until near St. Sebastian, where it improves; but the immediate neighbourhood of the town shews melancholy traces of the war. The Queenites destroyed every house: some have been repaired, but numbers, still in ruins, shew how impartially the work of destruction was done. It explains why the Basques were such zealous Carlists; indeed, so strong was this feeling, though shewn to a weak and worthless object, and so strong was the country, that had not Maroto been a traitor, the war would still be raging.

We reached San Sebastian about three. It is a well-built town, containing but few remains of its ancient greatness: an Englishman must blush when he hears that this was caused by the war of 1813. The English took it by storm, and destroyed the greater part of the town; so that since that date it has been rebuilt: this has

been done very regularly, and the streets, though narrow, are good. The "Plaza" is also perfectly regular, surrounded by arcades; all the windows are numbered, with a view to letting them out at bull-fights; the municipality, on letting the houses, reserve the windows on these occasions, when the occupiers must vacate.

We went to the Hôtel Français, kept by a Frenchman, named La Fille, who, involved in some affaire d'opinion at Brest, established himself here: the promises held out by the approach were anything but attractive. The entrance was occupied by a cobbler, with all the sweet-smelling accompaniments of his trade; this led to a dark and dirty staircase, and on the second floor we found the apartments, which did not look at all inviting, and yet, on trial, they turned out far more comfortable than we expected, and the living very good.

Immediately after our arrival, we went to deliver the letters the Consul of Bayonne had given us: one was for Mr. B——, the English vice-consul, who was not at home; but we found Mr. Ybar, a young man speaking English very well. We were fortunate in meeting him, for he most obligingly devoted himself to us,

and to his attention we are indebted for our pleasant visit to San Sebastian.

He accompanied us in our walk to the citadel. It occupies the summit of the rock, at the foot of which the town is built; the view from this point is very fine — a magnificent extent of sea. The town and its little harbour stand below — beyond, an extensive view over the country, bounded by heights and wood, and studded with ruined houses—the tender recollection of *Christian* occupation. The commanding height, on which is an old tower, formerly used as a light-house, and up which Lord John Hay contrived to drag one or two guns during the war, forms the southern boundary of the bay, where the bathing is admirable, and whose smooth strand makes St. Sebastian a favourite watering place.

We then visited the church, which in its interior is handsome—in the same style as that of Irun, but not so rich: it stands in that little slip of houses which were not destroyed by the English, being reserved for lodgings. We saw afterwards, the part of the works near the river, where the English stormed the town, and continued our walk until dinner time, which meal

was, unluckily, a bad attempt at a "diner à l'Anglaise," that is, a tough, under-done, bad beef-steak: however, we had other things, and so fared tolerably well; and our beds proved far better than we expected.

CHAPTER XI.

Splendid Fête at St. Sebastian — Good Music — Spanish Hospitality—Walk to Passages—Evening Promenade—The Fandango.

Thursday, *June* 10.—Was a great day at San Sebastian, La Fête Dieu, and we were lucky to come in for it. In Spain, the fêtes are still held on the days they occur; in France, they are postponed to the following Sunday: it is in contemplation to introduce the same practice into Spain. Women are no longer permitted to become nuns in Spain, and all the monasteries have been done away with. Mr. Ybar, and his pretty sister Candida, called on us, and we went to the church. The gentlemen sat in a gallery, arranged with stalls, like a cathedral; the ladies were all in the aisle, and the universal mantilla, worn over, in many instances, gaily-embroidered shawls of Merino, looked very well.

Last night I bought one, and therefore took my place in due form.

The choir and organ, with some amateur musicians, vocal and instrumental, were in the gallery where the men sat, and we had a good deal of Rossini's music, some airs from his most beautiful operas being performed in the instrumental parts. The chants, however, were sacred; and a young man, a pupil of Rubini's, who had been for three years in London, sang a solo, with a fine voice.

The church ceremony lasted about an hour, and then the procession began: the streets through which it passed were strewed with rushes, and the balconies ornamented with hangings, some of tapestry, some of silk, some of simple white cotton, but altogether producing a gay effect.

Troops lined the streets, and at intervals the guns of the citadel fired. The procession opened with three men, in full-dress liveries; two of them played on a pipe, which they stopped with one hand, and beat the drum with the other; the third played on a larger drum; the air, a kind of plaintive march, the music and instruments purely Basques, and of the most remote antiquity.

A number of the Bourgeois, walking two and two, were followed by a company of the Engineers and their band, very fine-looking troops. To these succeeded a company of Grenadiers; and then came the holy part of the procession, the leading dignitary under an embroidered canopy, upon which the spectators threw rose-leaves from the windows; he carried the Host, and was supported by two priests, others walking by the side, and two incense bearers before him. He was preceded by a priest, bearing a standard of embroidered yellow silk, of high antiquity, and in the form of half a cross: a lamb was embroidered on it; the priest was supported by two gentlemen in full dress.

Immediately after the canopy, came the general commanding the district, supported by the mayor and his adjunct. We got excellent places in the house of Mr. Caillié, who had been for some time in the United States: near his house stood the colonel of the regiment, who kept the lines and the colours of the regiment: they were laid flat on the ground before the priest, when the procession halted, the priest came forward, and whilst all the assistants were on their knees, he blessed the colours, by moving

the Host over them, and afterwards walked upon them, to shew the superiority of the church over everything: he then returned to the canopy, and the procession proceeded.

Opposite to Mr. Caillié's house a piece of carpet was spread; and a little lower in the street, the procession stopped, that the people might receive a blessing: this was very striking; every soul, troops and all, were on their knees, and a feeling of the deepest reverence seemed universal. At Mr. Caillié's there was a large assembly, the ladies well dressed, all wearing the becoming mantilla, and among them were some very pretty girls. We had, for refreshments, strawberries, cakes, and sweet wine.

We then went to Mr. Ybar's house, to see the procession on its return: here were other ladies assembled, and more refreshments, and afterwards we had some good music. Two gentlemen sang some beautiful Spanish airs to a guitar accompaniment, and then some ladies alternately took the instrument, and delighted us by the graceful and plaintive manner in which they sang. I understood that the greatest equality exists in society. Every person in the town, high and low, is known to his neighbour,

and rich and poor are on a certain footing of intimacy: amongst those at Mr. Ybar's to-day, were two pretty girls who earned their livelihood with their needle. There is not a carriage in the town.

The ceremony over, we went home, and the town was so quiet, that it was evident every one did the same thing. W—— afterwards called on Mr. B——, and from his handsome wife got some intelligence about Spain. She has just returned from Madrid and Valencia, and said the diligence is the only mode of travelling—and the hotels are wretched, even at Madrid.

About six o'clock, Mr. Ybar called to walk with us towards Passages; and it was a charming expedition. We crossed the bridge over the Irumea, where excellent salmon are taken; and, ascending a hill of some height, had a fine view of the rich valley of Loyola, through which the river flows.

This valley gave birth to the great founder of the order of the Jesuits, and the view is very beautiful. I find that land is high in Guispuzcoa, not yielding in general more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Tenants are very seldom dispossessed, and generally hold on for generations, from father to son: a common mode of letting, is for the landlord

to give the house and seed—the farmer tills the ground, and they divide the crop.

It is supposed that the "Fueros" will be confirmed,—except that the contribution to the state, instead of being, as under the old regime, in name at least, voluntary, will be fixed; but the mode of taxation left to the states. We and our obliging cicerone crossed over to the new road leading to Passages, and from a high part of it, called, I think, "the View of two Crosses," we saw it, or rather the steep heights which form its narrow entrance. On the top, is the fort, still called Lord John Hay; the harbour is excellent, but of difficult access. We hastened back to see the promenade, which was very interesting; the ladies still wearing their mantillas, and the peasantry attired in their holiday costume, but contrary to the usual habits of other nations, the dress of the men was far more brilliant and varied than that of the women. Many had embroidered waistcoats, and short blue cloth jackets, ornamented with patterns of different coloured leather on the sleeves and back; the high conical-shaped hat, which gives such a picturesque, as well as aristocratic look to the Basque peasantry, was

adorned with feathers, and the cloak, thrown over one shoulder, was worn with true Spanish grace.

Some of the women of the lower orders, had, indeed, petticoats of a bright-red, or yellow cloth; the black mantillas, however, invariably covered the neck and shoulders—and the most common colour amongst the older women was black.

In several different parts of the promenade, dancing was going on. Sometimes the fandango, with its lively accompaniment of castanets, was in full force, but the favourite seemed to be an old Basque dance, something resembling a gavotte I remember learning as a child, in which the graceful pas de Basque occurs constantly; and this they executed with much ease and grace.

I was amused at the stately and decorous distance at which the gentlemen and ladies, (of the higher orders, I mean,) walked from each other. The moment we returned from Passages, and approached the promenade, Mr. Y——'s pretty sisters came and took me with them, and we paraded up and down, leaving W——, and their brother, and one or two other friends to

walk up and down at a respectful distance; and this lasted during the whole evening, no words passing between the different sexes, though to judge by the eloquent language of the dark eyes, which glanced from under the graceful folds of black-lace mantillas, and the gratified smile which lighted up the handsome features of some of the aristocratic-looking youths as the fair ones passed by, they were well known to each other.

"When do you ever speak to those gentlemen, who appear so delighted to see you?" I inquired of a pretty blushing young girl who had joined our party.

"Only when we dance," she replied. "Yonder caballero was my partner last Sunday at the ball; he is my cousin too, but he never spoke to me till we danced together that evening, which was my first ball."

Friday, June 11.—Though we started exactly at six, on our return to Bayonne, our attentive friend M. Ybar was at the office to see us off. After leaving the ruined church, and the walls which shew how much the neighbourhood of St. Sebastian suffered during the late war, we ascended the steep hill which leads to Hernani.

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Sketched by Lady Chatterton

THE FORT and LIGHT-HOUSE of S^{t} SEBASTIAN, SPAIN

On the summit of the next height I sketched the view here given. Met a number of carts loaded with barrel staves, a great export from San Sebastian. Cocoa-nut shells are also exported to Dublin, to make for the Irish that preparation of cocoa, known by the attractive appellation of "miserable." Barrels are sent to Bilboa, I think, which has a considerable export trade in flour.

The cart drawn by two oxen is universal in the Basque Provinces — here the carts have wooden-wheels, crossed and shod with iron. The oxen are all of the same colour, a dingy yellow, and have the same curious covering of sheep-skin on their heads. On approaching the old town of Ouyarzon, or Ourgunzun, I made the sketch which is given at page 251.

The peasants are now occupied with their maize. We had a rapid descent to Hernani, changed horses, as before, at Astigaragga, and about ten, reached Behobie, on the French side of the Bidasoa. Here we breakfasted, and went through the ordeal of the French Custom-House, which is very strict. The Spanish bread is so much better than the French that we bought a loaf at Irun; it was only by courtesy that it

passed duty free. I wore my mantilla, otherwise it would have paid duty.

We reached Bayonne at three, and after making our arrangements, packing up, &c., proceeded by post to Biaritts, where we took possession of Madame Esperon's house, which promises to suit us very well. How we have since enjoyed the charming air from the heights overlooking the sea! The unceremonious, independent life we lead, is delightful. We have the place almost to ourselves.

CHAPTER XII.

Legend of Urtubi Castle—Louis XI. and Beltran de Cueva.

THERE is a story connected with so many of the beautiful and interesting places on the borders of Spain and France, that I must relate it.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the Castle of Urtubi, which we passed on the road to St. Sebastian, belonged to Count de Montreal. He was a valiant knight, and, like most others in those times, devoted to war, but he also enjoyed the short intervals of peace which border strife, and internal feuds and dissensions, sometimes afforded. The Count de Montreal's daughter was universally acknowledged to be the most lovely girl in all Pays Basque. Even many Spanish knights, whose eyes had been rejoiced by a sight of her loveliness during a short visit she once paid to her aunt, at Hernani, maintained

that Spain itself could not boast of such a beauty. Elvira de Montreal was, besides, sole heiress to all her father's broad lands and feudal castles; and of course her hand was eagerly sought by many a valiant knight and powerful noble. But her father loved her better than anything in the world, and, contrary to the usual habit of those times, he declared that he would never control her choice, but allow her full power to select according to her fancy, provided the family of her husband was noble. Elvira's lot, then, appeared most enviable; yet, in the midst of all this apparent happiness, a cloud was often noticed on her fair brow, and it was evident that not one of all her admirers had power to awaken a feeling of interest in her heart. Some persons whispered that a favourite page of her mother's, whose birth was of low degree, had secretly won her affections; others observed that it was only since the short visit to Spain, when she attended a tournament at Hernani, that the cheerful buoyancy of spirits seemed gone.

That visit was made during one of the short truces which very rarely occurred in those days of border warfare. Since then a regular war had broken out between France and Spain, and

daily skirmishes took place between the chiefs on either side of the Bidasoa. This state of things had continued about a year, when a rumour arose that peace was about to be established between the two countries. It was even said that Louis XI., who had lately made a pilgrimage to Nôtre Dame de Sarrance, in the Valley d'Aspe, was coming to visit Urtubi, for the purpose of carrying on negotiations; and that the Kings of Aragon and Castile had quitted their kingdoms, and, confiding in the honour of Louis XI., were about to trust themselves within the French territory.

Little was said on these important subjects at the Castle of Urtubi, but preparations were made, as if for the reception of guests of distinction. The state chamber was hung with new arras, and broiderers were busily employed to adorn the satin hangings and bed-furniture with new and cunning devices, and even the fair hands of Elvira and her stately lady mother were occupied in embroidering a prie-dieu of unusual magnificence. In short, all was bustle and anxious expectation amid the numerous inhabitants of Urtubi, and the neighbouring town of Urugne.

Elvira, too, seemed in expectation of some joyful event; her step became lighter, and often, during the long hours she sate at work, she would sing the wild airs of her country with all her former glee.

The only person who did not seem to participate in the bustle and joyous anticipation was Rudolf, the favourite page of the Countess de Montreal. He wandered about the castle with a listless air; his voice, which was wont to cheer the maidens at their work, was now silent, and his lute unstrung. Yet Elvira spoke kindly as usual to him, and even once inquired the reason of his depressed spirits. Rudolf answered with a pettish, haughty air, which called forth a rebuke from the stately Countess. But she was a kind dame, though somewhat proud, and so full of respect for her own and husband's family, and so occupied in the maintenance of state, that she had little time to think of anything else. Yet, when she saw the look of deep sorrow her rebuke had caused on the handsome countenance of her favourite page, she said—

"Well, I suppose it is all my own fault. I have spoilt you by allowing one of such low degree to associate with ourselves, and by praising your singing and verses. There, never

mind it, now. Go and send Madelaine to me, I want to tell her about the new toilette table in the purple chamber."

Rudolf obeyed her commands, but the kind words of his mistress failed to clear up the dark cloud that lowered on his brow. Muttering some inaudible words, he hurried through the long corridors, and as soon as he found Madelaine, and commanded her with a haughty air to attend the Countess, he left the castle by a small postern gate on the south side, and proceeded through the thick woods, which covered then, as they do now, the height where the castle stands. Rudolf had hitherto been considered an amiable as well as clever youth; but as yet the world had gone well with him—he had been successful far beyond his expectations; but he was of those characters whose qualities, both good and bad, seem only to become fully developed by misfortune. And perhaps he had been till now as ignorant as most other people of his own real character. He was foster-brother to Elvira, and from earliest childhood had lived in the castle, and been loved and caressed by its inmates. He was now surprised at the bitterness and violence of his own feelings as he paced up and down the dark recesses of the

forest. He may have thought, like Wordsworth's Borderer:—

> "Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
> The motion of a muscle, this way or that;
> 'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy
> We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
> Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
> And shares the nature of infinity."

After some moments of deep thought, he muttered—"Yes, I will accept their offer. Those vile, presumptuous Spaniards shall be ensnared, for she loves one of those dark nobles of Castile: I have marked her well. But she shall be mine, though millions perish—though this fair land be again deluged in blood, and those proud towers consumed with fire; and the poor serf of low degree, to whom even the use of arms is forbidden—the despised page, shall excite the discord, and kindle the flame."

That night Rudolf was absent from the castle, and no one knew where; but the next morning he resumed his usual duties with unwonted alacrity, and received, in consequence, the commendations of his mistress, and even an approving smile from the Lady Elvira. The following evening, King Louis, attended by a

brilliant retinue, was expected to arrive. The Countess, who delighted in state and grandeur, was beyond measure pleased at the prospect of a visit from her sovereign. Though the last fortnight had been occupied in preparing for his reception, yet she had scarcely believed it possible such a glorious and joyful event would actually occur. She had never before seen the King—for the Count, who was aware of the dangers of the capital, would never consent to gratify her ardent desire to visit Paris and attend the court. He did not now look upon the intended visit of Louis with so much joy—on the contrary, he dreaded the approach of such a wily politician as the King, surrounded too, as he was, by lawless followers and unprincipled divines; but he scarcely expected that such a timid man as Louis XI. would think of venturing so near the confines of Spain—that country which had been so long at war with France, and Urtubi Castle being only about two hours march from the Bidasoa, which was then, as it is still, the narrow boundary between the two countries.

As the hour of the King's expected arrival approached, the principal inmates of the castle went up to the battlements, and gazed in the

direction of St. Jean de Luz. The Count appeared unusually thoughtful, and he looked with some uneasiness on the beautiful countenance of his daughter. The father and child both seemed as if oppressed by some apprehension. They soon forgot to gaze on the road where the gorgeous retinue of Louis was to appear, and moved slowly towards the other side of the battlements. When they had reached the western turret, which commanded a view of the road to Spain, Elvira said—

"I see, my dearest father, you are apprehensive about this visit. What are your fears?"

"Dearest child, it is only on your account that I dread it. I well know Louis would not venture here without some powerful motive; and still less do I think it likely that the sovereigns of Spain would trust themselves in France, the country of their bitter enemy. The alleged reason that Louis gives for coming here to meet them is, I think, only a pretext. All I fear is, that he may covet the rich heritage to which you will succeed, for some of his favourites; and thus the anxiety I have always felt, that my darling child may marry a man she can really love may be frustrated. I now almost

wish I had persuaded you to accept the Lord of Orthez. He, at least, would have loved and protected you."

"Ah! do not regret it, dearest father, I could never have loved him; and I would rather die than——"

"Yet, my dear child, remember that all damsels but yourself are disposed of by their parents, and they often have not even seen their intended husband. Thus your mother, darling, was betrothed to me, and we never saw each other till the day before our marriage."

"It is very true; but you, dear father, have taught me better things, and—and——"

"Wherefore that blush? I sometimes think you have seen the person you would like to wed. Yet, of all the noblesse I have seen, there is not one who is worthy of you."

The Count cast a scrutinizing glance towards the Page Rudolf, who stood with the Countess at the further end of the battlements.

"Tell me the truth, dear child," said the Count.

Elvira blushed still more deeply, she trembled, and was about to reply; but at that moment a shout was heard.

"They are coming!" exclaimed the Countess, clapping her hands.—"Joy! joy!—we shall indeed have the honour of receiving our sovereign within these walls. See how gracefully he sits on his palfrey!—and what a handsome knight that is on his right! See how gallantly he manages his charger! But come, let us hasten down to greet them."

A splendid banquet had been prepared, and, soon after the King's arrival, the whole party sat down in the knights' hall. A table at the upper end, on a raised dais, was reserved for those highest in rank; and there the King, with a few of his favourite followers, was placed.

"I find that fame has for once spoken the truth,—or, rather, not said enough," exclaimed the King, whose penetrating eyes had been riveted on the fair countenance of Elvira. "Your daughter is even more lovely than I expected; though nothing seems to be talked of in these parts but her beauty. It is a pity, Count, you have concealed such a rich jewel so long from our gaze. And how comes it, too, that she is still unmarried? Are there no valiant knights in Bearn or Foix worthy of such a prize?"

Poor Elvira was much embarrassed. The

King perceived it, and endeavoured to relieve her, by saying, "Well, blush not, fair one, I do not seek to penetrate the secret of your heart. Nay, look up," he whispered, in a lower tone; "be not afraid! I do not come to control your feelings or act the tyrant, though I know your father suspects me of such a design. But," he continued, in a gayer though still low tone, "it is the faculty of kings to see further than others; and what if I knew, better than even your father himself, the real wishes of that little heart?"

Louis paused to see the effect of his words, and then, bending still nearer, he whispered one single word in her ear which made her start, and overspread her countenance with blushes. She raised her eyes in astonishment, and gazed with joy and hope into the face of Louis.

"Ha, I am right!" said he, with a low, chuckling laugh, "I see the blessed Lady of Sarrance has granted my prayers, and enables me to be the good genius of my people, to see into their hearts and gratify their wishes. Well, say nothing of this to any one,* but trust with confi-

* It is not at all improbable that Louis XI. may have been well informed on the apparently trivial subject of the fair heiress of Montreal's secret feelings, for he maintained spies

dence in the future. My lord Count," continued Louis, turning towards his host, and speaking in a loud voice, "I fear we must be further burdensome on your hospitality. To-morrow, at noon, I expect that our renowned cousins of Castile and Aragon will come to speak with me on some important matters,—say, can your hospitable halls receive them? You start!—per-

in every part of his dominions; and so great was his anxiety to obtain information from different parts of his kingdom, that one of the first acts of his reign was the establishment of the post. That blessing, an offset to the many evils of that cruel king's reign, was first established, in France, in 1464.

He moved about, too, with wonderful speed and secrecy; in order to ascertain, by personal observation, whether the information he received was correct, or to negotiate in person some treaty with foreign nations. His visit to Urtubi Castle was probably soon after his brother's death, whom he is said to have poisoned; and his departure from Tours, on this southern expedition, is thus described by the old historian, Monstrelet:—

"On Saturday morning, the 14th of March, the king, who then resided at Plessis du Parc, formerly called Montils les Tours, set off very early, and with a few attendants, for Bordeaux and Bayonne. That no person living might follow him, he ordered the gates of Tours to be closed until ten o'clock had struck; and had a bridge broken down near to Tours, to prevent any one crossing the river. For further security, he commanded the Lord de Gaucourt, the captain of the gentlemen in his household, to remain in Tours, for the same purpose."

haps you dread the approach of those who have been hitherto always our enemies. Yet, fear nothing; this interview will, under our Lady of Clery's blessed protection, prove of inestimable benefit to our beloved country."

The Count replied that nothing would give him more pleasure than to receive such illustrious guests. "But I knew not that they were within many days' journey of the frontier," he added.

"Last night they reached Hernani, and were graciously entertained by its duke, the Prince of Leon,—who is, as you may know, a near kinsman of the King of Castile, and whose son, Don Garcia de Leon, will accompany their majesties here to-morrow."

The King cast a hasty glance towards Elvira, who endeavoured to conceal the embarrassment she felt.

"This night," continued the King, without noticing her blushes, "their majesties pass at Fontarabia, in the royal palace of the sovereigns of Castile; and to-morrow, about the hour of noon, they will reach this place."

"We shall, indeed, be most honoured!" exclaimed the Countess. "I well remember Don

Garcia, who won the chief prize at the Hernani tournament, and received it from my daughter's hands. We shall be most highly honoured by a visit from their august majesties."

But the pleasure she felt at the expected honour was contending in her mind, with some embarrassment, as to how such a numerous host could be lodged. The King had already brought more than double the number of followers she had expected; and besides those lodged at the castle, she learnt that the adjoining towns of Urugne and St. Jean de Luz were filled with his guards and retinue.

"Do not be uneasy, Lady," said the King, who instantly divined her thoughts; "our noble cousins will only take their mid-day banquet within these walls, and, after conferring with me on the welfare of our dear countries, will depart, and return to Fontarabia."

"But surely they will bring a large force with them," said the Count. "No Spaniard has been known to cross the Bidasoa unarmed since the expiration of the last truce; and surely the Kings——"

"Fear not, brave Count, they come with peaceful intentions, attended only by twenty fol-

lowers. They wisely put faith in their brother's kindly feelings, who is anxious to restore that peace which my poor brother of Guienne was the unfortunate means of troubling. Peace be to his blessed soul!" continued the King, with a deep sigh, as he devoutly crossed himself.

When the banquet was ended, the minstrels, who as usual were stationed in the gallery above, struck up a lively air, and the dance began. The handsome knight, the Duke of Alençon, led forth Elvira ; and her mother remarked, with a triumphant smile, to her lord—"Well, I think at last our child has found a noble worthy of her hand. See how joyous she looks ; I have not seen her so happy for a long time. And, indeed, the noble Duke of Alençon would be a princely match!"

"I like not his countenancē," said the Count, with some anxiety, "and am surprised to see that Elvira smiles so graciously, and listens with any patience to his foolish discourse."

"And so she ought! Surely the King's near relative is not to be despised."

Elvira did, indeed, appear radiant with happiness, and smiled graciously at all the compliments the young Duke poured into her ear ; but

her thoughts were far away, and she several times betrayed by her answers that she did not even hear his enthusiastic praises.

In the mean time the page, Rudolf, watched everything that passed. This handsome youth had not escaped the King's notice. He had stood behind Elvira's chair during the banquet; and once, when he approached to present a golden salver to the Count, Louis said something to him in a low tone, which had such an effect that he turned deadly pale, and nearly let the salver fall.

"How strange," thought Elvira, as she leaned over the battlements the following morning, and anxiously watched the road from Spain, along which the sovereigns were expected, "that this King Louis, whose very name always made me tremble, should be acquainted with my most secret thoughts—should know what I have never breathed to a human being, not even to my dear father. Indeed, it is only lately that I have suspected it myself, for Don Garcia did not say anything." And here Elvira fell into a

reverie,—one of those deep fits of musing in which thoughts are too vague to be expressed by words.

The whole scene of that memorable tournament at Hernani passed before her eyes. She saw the broad arena, filled with splendid warriors in their gayest attire, distinct and vivid as when the May-day sun illumined those richly-carved balconies, and glistened on the jewelled circlets of many a Spanish fair; she saw the heights of Santa Barbara, with its ancient fortress, defined against the clear blue sky, and heard the flourish of trumpets and the touching tones of the Basque pipes playing the old national air.* But among all the noble knights and brilliant dames which she recalled to her memory, a single form was most conspicuous. She remembered the exact spot where he first arrested her attention. She followed his every movement; again her heart beat high with agitation,—for at one time he swerved in his saddle, and the followers of his opponent uttered a shout of exultation; but fear was turned into

* This air is still played on all state occasions, and we heard it the other day in the processions at St. Sebastian.

joy when she beheld him vanquish every obstacle, and gracefully approach to receive from her hands the prize awarded to the conqueror.

Elvira was on the battlements alone, yet she covered her face with her hands, to conceal the blushes which a recollection of the pressure of his hand occasioned. Then every word he uttered during the banquet and the dance was again repeated—every look pondered over; and her own impressions of the eventful day, on retiring to rest. Then those sweet, thrilling tones which brought her to the window. The blissful recognition of his voice, the air, the words he sang, are ever present to her mind, and she clasps her hands in an ecstasy of delight.

But the morrow: alas! he had not appeared, she never heard anything more of him. Poor Elvira!—a tear has replaced that beaming glance which so lately danced in her eyes. Hark!—a trumpet is heard. They come! Yes, there is the banner of Castile waving over the height behind Urungne; that of Aragon, too; and—oh, joy! there follows the White Lion—that well-known emblem which had so often appeared in her happiest dreams, the banner of Don Garcia de Leon.

King Louis was right: the train consisted exactly of twenty men, not one more; and it arrived at the very hour he said. Strange that these two rival kings should venture together, and with so few followers, into the country of their bitter enemy.

"He is a wonderful man!" thought Elvira; and a feeling of hope was again awakened in her heart.

"Your presence is required. The Lady Countess bade me inform you that their majesties are arrived," said Rudolf, gazing on her with an expression of more ardent and determined admiration than his speaking eyes had ever yet expressed. Elvira shuddered as she met his glance—why, she knew not, for she had always loved the page almost as a brother.

"You are much changed, Rudolf," she said, with a gentle tone.

"So is the Lady Elvira; and the whole world is changed!" he exclaimed, with a bitter laugh, as he followed her down the winding turret stair.

The Kings had retired to a private conference before Elvira reached the reception hall; but

among their followers she descried Don Garcia, in earnest conversation with her mother. But I will not describe their meeting, the blushes of Elvira, or the delight of Garcia—I will only say that her image had never been absent from his mind during the year which had passed since their first and last meeting.

The reason of his sudden disappearance the morning of her departure was soon explained. His cousin, the Lord of Pampeluna, had sent to crave his assistance against an attack of the Count of Armagnac. Not an instant was to be lost, but he trusted in a few days to have been able to return to Hernani, and never contemplated the possibility of any occurrence that would then prevent his proceeding at once to Elvira's castle, and endeavour to obtain her hand. But before he was able to leave Pampeluna, war again broke out between the two countries, and the Bidasoa became an insurmountable barrier to any approach to Urtubi. Thus passed a year; and it may be imagined that Don Garcia received the summons of his sovereign to attend him to Elvira's abode with no small joy. Yet still he feared the Count of Montreal might not consent

to the marriage of his daughter with the native of a country so often at war with France; and even now, as he stood with Elvira in the deep recess of a bay window that looked on the river, he feared that their blissful meeting would soon be brought to an end; but the beautiful girl looked so beaming with delight, and she spoke so confidently of her father's wish for her happiness, that he gave himself up to joy.

In less than an hour, during which the politic Louis had contrived to conclude a treaty with Spain greatly advantageous to France, the door opened, and Louis, followed by Count Montreal, entered the room.

"I have no objection, Sire, provided my daughter consents; on the contrary, I well know that a more valiant and amiable knight than Don Garcia does not exist in all Spain."

"Well, we shall see!" said Louis, with a malicious smile, approaching the window where Elvira stood. "Fair vassal, we have determined to exercise our royal privilege, and dispose of this pretty hand in marriage. The treaty between our country and Spain is ready for signature; but one condition remains to be ful-

filled, and I trust you will not prevent the desired peace by any unruly objection."

While Louis was saying this, Don Garcia, who had never seen the King of France till that morning, and who knew not that he had any kindly feelings towards himself, gazed with horror and apprehension on his sinister countenance, and was about to interfere with some warm assertion of the lady's right to dispose of herself in marriage, when the King, turning to him, and taking his hand, said—

"Stay, Sir Knight, I guess what you are going to say. I know your thoughts; but I shall soon see these haughty looks brought low. Ay, and on your bended knee you will do homage to me as your lawful sovereign. Nay, do not seize the handle of your sword! Your own King of Castile is safe, and will presently appear. But kneel, Sir Knight, kneel at this fair lady's feet, and crave her hand; and if you cannot win her heart, you are no true knight. Ah! I knew how it would be. Well, well, I forgive you; and may you both be happy! Such a sight as that really makes me feel almost young again? Well, Sir Count, does your daughter look very miserable? Have I put a tyrannical

force on her inclinations? Shall we need the aid of dungeons and iron cages to enforce obedience?"

The royal guests had departed from Urtubi. Don Garcia remained for a few days with his intended bride, and then proceeded to Hernani, to make preparations for her reception. The marriage was to take place in less than a month. The estates of Count Montreal and those of Don Garcia's father were both of great extent, and formed, for many miles, the border between France and Spain,—the Duke of Leon's extending as far as the ancient town of Fontarabia, and those of Montreal to Hendaye; thus, the union of these two houses by marriage was a measure very likely to ensure a continuance of peace between the countries. Louis, who by means of the new plan of posts, obtained what appeared then to be a miraculous knowledge of all that was going on in his dominions, had calculated right, and returned to his favourite residence of Plessis les Tours, in high spirits at the success of his negotiations. But in this turbu-

lent world, and particularly in the restless and unprincipled fifteenth century, the best formed schemes for peace were often overturned.

Henry IV., of Castile, had been accompanied to Urtubi by his favourite Beltran de Cueva, a man who, originally a page, had risen to the most important offices in the kingdom. Wily and politic as King Louis himself, Beltran had long been in correspondence with that monarch, and he had suggested the expediency of cementing the peace by a marriage between the great border houses.

Full of his own projects of aggrandizement, and dreading the faction which upheld the Infanta Isabella, the King's sister, in her rights of succession to the crown, he was anxiously desirous to obtain the assistance of France. He had not, however, seen the lovely heiress of Montreal before the peace was concluded, and the marriage contract signed; but ere the kings left the castle, he was presented to Elvira. She had heard many sinister reports about him, and therefore it was with a shudder that she replied to his whispered compliments, and she looked on him with a cold haughtiness which made a deep and lasting impression on the upstart Duke.

During the time of preparation for the marriage, Rudolf was often absent from the castle. Elvira, who observed with sorrow the great change in his disposition, began to fear that the surmises of her attendant Barbara were right, and that the poor youth had indulged a foolish love for herself. Several times she was on the point of speaking about him to her father, or Don Garcia, but a feeling of timidity always kept her silent. There was at times a ferocity in his looks which made her tremble, and she felt a vague kind of apprehension when his melancholy eyes were fixed on her, as if there was some fearful spell in their ardent gaze.

A few evenings before the day fixed for the marriage, and after Elvira had retired to rest, Barbara rushed into her room, with looks of horror:

"Oh, dearest lady!" she exclaimed, "may St. Jean and all the saints protect us!—the country is up in arms again! They say, Don Garcia's people have been attacked, by some of our own lord's vassals, at Behobie; and all Hernani is up in arms, and thousands of Spaniards are crossing the Bidasoa, to come and besiege us."

Elvira, in great alarm, ran to her father's

room. The strange tidings had already reached him, and he was hastily buckling on his armour.

"Fear not, my child," he exclaimed; "it is doubtless only an outbreak of our lawless peasantry of the Bastan. They were ever a turbulent set, and difficult to keep in order. They have been discontented ever since peace was declared. Nay, do not tremble, dearest girl—I have already dispatched a messenger to the Lord of Orthez, for more assistance to quell this rebellion."

"To the Lord of Orthez, father! Surely, were it not better to send for Don Garcia?" said Elvira, whose fears were increased by hearing of the approach of a rejected and disappointed suitor. "Surely, since——"

"Foolish girl! know you not that the moment these border feuds break out there is no possibility of sending a messenger across the Bidasoa? and if the Spaniards attack us—— but hark! what do I hear?—an armed force approaching on the road from Spain?"

"Joy—joy! it must be Don Garcia himself," thought Elvira.

The Count had hurried down to the barbican, and Elvira and her mother ran to the window

that looked towards the road from Spain. It was a clear moonlight—one of those warm, glowing nights which the southern atmosphere alone can give; and they could see the armed force which had approached—but, alas, Elvira looked in vain for the well-known banner of Don Garcia! The standard of Castile was indeed there, but no White Lion could be seen.

"Let me see," exclaimed the Countess, "three boars' heads, gules, in a field, azure—whose device can it be? That banner was here on the day of the conference—I noticed it well. Yes, now I remember—it is that of the King's favourite, Beltran de Cueva."

"Beltran de Cueva!" said Elvira, shuddering with horror. "Oh, that Don Garcia were here! See, he has crossed the drawbridge—oh, God, protect us! Ah! thank Heaven, the others are not admitted! I trust my father will not accede to his proposal, whatever it may be—he can mean us no good."

"Foolish girl! what do you fear?" said the Countess, who liked excitement and change. She had been much struck with the handsome favourite; and his honeyed compliments had made a deep impression on a disposition some-

what vain. "I am sure all will be well now that the noble Chancellor of Castile is come himself to visit us. But bless me, what do I see—he is departing again so soon! Gracious Heaven! see, his troops surround the castle!"

Elvira breathed more freely. With the instinctive feeling of dislike which innocence and purity often has for vice, she dreaded the presence and apparent friendship of that lawless noble more than the formidable army which now surrounded the castle.

At this moment the Count entered the room, with a hurried air and disturbed countenance.

"You must prepare for instant flight; there is no hope of maintaining peace with Spain but on conditions too ignominious to accept. The base-born Cueva has had the audacity to demand your hand in marriage, my darling child, and insolently to bid me to break my faith with your betrothed husband."

"But where is Don Garcia!—oh, tell me,—is he safe? Surely they must have used base stratagem and violence to prevent his coming to our assistance."

"All is ready," exclaimed the Page Rudolf,

rushing into the room; "and not a moment to be lost. They are forcing the barbacan, and in five minutes they may have entered the castle if we do not receive a reinforcement."

"Go, then, my darling child—my dearest wife! I trust we shall soon meet again; in the meantime, Rudolf and Pierre will conduct you by the secret passage to Bayonne, where you will be quite secure till this sad outbreak be quelled. But why do you tremble so, my darling child?"

Elvira was indeed terrified. She dreaded falling into the hands of the base Cueva—but to fly under the protection of Rudolf filled her with other and vague apprehensions of a scarcely less painful nature. However, there seemed no alternative. She endeavoured, indeed, to persuade her father to accompany them, but his sense of honour was so great that nothing would induce him to quit the castle.

The party proceeded in silence through the long, dark, subterranean passage, which led towards St. Jean de Luz. Besides Rudolf, the ladies were attended by two men at arms; and the Countess, who had several times before been obliged to fly by this passage from the hostile troops of Spain, felt much less apprehension

than her daughter. Her love, too, for excitement and adventure nearly equalled her fondness for splendour and display; therefore she proceeded almost gaily along the dismal passage. Not so Elvira; for the last time they had been obliged to fly she was quite a child, and her heart now sank as she quitted the abode of her youth.

Rudolf rode by her side, and endeavoured, with more tenderness in his manner than she at all liked, to cheer her drooping spirits. She saw, too, now and then, by the flickering light of the torches, that a smile of triumph played on the Page's handsome countenance, and she began bitterly to regret that she had never mentioned her suspicions about him to her dear father. But it was now too late even to return, they had reached the mouth of the subterranean passage. The ponderous iron gate turned on its rusty hinges, and closed behind them with a clang that sounded to poor Elvira like the death-knell of her hopes. The torches were extinguished, they emerged into the thick forest which, in those days, spread over the mountain's side and extended down to the gates of St. Jean de Luz. The bright moon-beams scarcely penetrated the thick chesnut and cork trees, and gave the

travellers much less light than the torches had afforded; yet, here and there, the spectral moon-beams gleamed on the white twisted roots and speckled stems of the beeches, making them shine like huge serpents, and adding to the horrors of the path.

"Are you certain of the road?" inquired Elvira of Rudolf, "do not we pass through St. Jean de Luz?"

"We must avoid it, lady, for the towns-people are ill-affected towards us, and a report reached the castle that they had given it up to the Spaniards. We shall be obliged to make a detour to the north."

"Then how are we to cross the water?" inquired Elvira; "surely would it not be better to traverse the high-road, and proceed some way up the stream where it is narrow?"

"Fear not, lady, we shall find a boat to take us over—for, believe me, the high-road is beset with Spanish troops. We could not cross it without danger."

Elvira saw it was useless to remonstrate, and therefore resigned herself to her fate, and proceeded in silence through the dismal forest. Their progress was slow, for there was no road, and the underwood in some places was so thick,

that it was with great difficulty they could find a passage. After some time, the Countess became quite tired, and she began to regret having left her comfortable room at Urtubi.

At last, after proceeding two hours, without reaching the river, she said—" Surely we must have lost ourselves !"

" We are going towards the west," whispered Elvira; " I saw it by the last slanting moonbeams that illumined yonder height ! We are going quite in a contrary direction from Bayonne." And she added, in a lower tone—" I much suspect the Page is playing us false—I feel sure we must now be near Hendaye."

" Rudolf play us false, child !—what can you mean ? I would as soon trust him, the son of our poor nurse Margaret, as your own father ! To Hendaye, indeed ! That would, truly, be to lead us close to the lion's den. Besides, how can you know we are going towards it ? I have seen nothing this last hour."

It was indeed now quite dark. The moon had long gone down. Elvira fancied that the Page had dismounted, and was leading her palfrey over a stony road, for the horse occasionally stumbled, but she could not distinguish any object. Soon afterwards, the horse stopped

for a few minutes; and then she heard an iron gate close behind them, and the sound echoed as if they were riding on pavement, under an arch. "Here we must dismount, dear lady," said Rudolf, while he gently drew her from her palfrey.

"Where are we? Let me go, I command you! Oh, help! help, dearest mother!—come to me! Save—oh, save your child!"

"You are alone with me, adored being," said Rudolf, passionately embracing her—"no one is near—you are at last in my power! Mine now and for ever!"

I will not describe the horror and dismay of Elvira. She screamed for assistance, but the hollow echoes of the passage alone answered her cry. Rudolf was touched by her distress, and suddenly changing his demeanour, he implored forgiveness. He promised to restore her to her father.

But Elvira's worst suspicions were now confirmed, and her heart sank as she remembered the look of deep determination and earnest resolve which had of late so often startled her to observe on his countenance. Any fate now seemed preferable to that of remaining in his

power—even to fall into the hands of the base Cueva appeared less dreadful; and bitterly she regretted having quitted her father. These thoughts and apprehensions overpowered her so completely, that she could scarcely stand. Almost senseless, she was borne along the dark passage by Rudolf, who now became seriously alarmed at having terrified her so much. At last, they reached the end of it, and a faint light was visible. They pass through another gate, up a flight of winding stairs, and enter a small turret chamber.

"Here I will leave you, dearest lady," he said, in a more respectful tone. "I leave you for one hour, to consider. In the adjoining chapel, a servant of God is ready to unite us. Be mine, or from that window you shall see Don Garcia murdered!—yes, he—that favoured rival—is in my power."

On hearing this, Elvira uttered a piercing shriek, and sank senseless on the ground. In vain Rudolf endeavoured to restore her to consciousness, and in an agony of self-reproach, he exclaimed—

"I have killed her—my foolish threat has destroyed the being I would give worlds to save.

Yes, I now find that my love for her is so great that I could sacrifice my own passion to see her happy."

He now perceived it was utterly impossible she could ever love him. He had made her miserable—he had destroyed the happiness of a creature who had never treated him with anything but kindness.

Thus, as Rudolf contemplated with agony the apparently lifeless form of Elvira, the better feelings of his wild and ill-regulated, yet affectionate heart revived, and he bitterly reproached himself for having destroyed her peace.

The night preceding that on which Urtubi Castle had been attacked by Beltran de Cueva, Don Garcia, who had no suspicion of any disturbance, was indulging in delightful anticipations of approaching happiness. His father had given up his magnificent palace at Hernani to the young people, and retired to his castle at Fontarabia, after causing the former to be fitted up with the greatest splendour.

Spain in those days was far advanced in civilization. Its inhabitants had imbibed a taste for

magnificence and luxury from the Moors, whom they sometimes equalled in the beauty of their architecture and decoration. Hernani still contains some remains of its ancient magnificence. A ruined building in the highest part of the town particularly attracted my attention, and I fancied it might have been the dwelling of the Dukes of Leon.*

On that eventful night, Don Garcia was suddenly arrested in his palace, accused of high treason, and conducted by a strong body of the King of Castile's troops to Ourgunzun.

Don Garcia immediately felt convinced this was Cueva's doing. The insolent favourite had, in several instances, ventured to arrest Castilian nobles, men of the highest rank, who had endeavoured to withstand his growing power; and now Don Garcia bitterly reproached himself for not having been more upon his guard. He remembered, too, with horror, that he had observed the impression Elvira's beauty had produced on the profligate Chamberlain. On being forced from his own palace, he hastily wrote a few lines, and contrived to give them to his Page, with orders to take the paper at once to his father at Font-

* See the view of Hernani, at page 196.

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OURGUNZUN CASTLE AND TOWN IN SPAIN.

arabia. The family of Leon was rich and powerful, and had such numerous friends, that Don Garcia had no doubt the news of his arrest would raise the whole neighbourhood in his favour, and soon liberate him from even the King's power. But it was for Elvira he trembled; he knew not how to rescue her; and all that night and the next day he paced up and down the narrow limits of his cell in an agony of apprehension.

It was near the summit of the highest tower of the ancient palace of the Kings of Castile—that stately edifice which was afterwards rendered still more magnificent by the Emperor Charles V., and some remains of it may even now be seen in the view here given of Ourgunzun. Don Garcia gazed through the iron bars of his narrow window which commanded a view of the road from Hernani, but in vain he watched for the approach of any troops—all was quiet; no sound indicated the coming of his father's feudal vassals. The second day passed slowly away; the shade of evening fell, and Don Garcia gave himself up to despair. Towards midnight a sound was heard. "That was certainly the clang of arms!" thought the captive; "the place is stormed!" Yes, that is the war-cry of

his race—"San Giovanni for Hernani!" A long hour of suspense ensued, during which either party seemed alternately to have the advantage. The door is forced open, and Don Garcia is clasped in his father's arms.

"Is she safe?—is my beloved Elvira rescued?" was Don Garcia's first inquiry.

The old Duke shook his head, mournfully, and replied—"I fear this outbreak is worse than we first imagined. The base-born Cueva has been joined by the French; and it appears there were traitors even in the Castle of Urtubi. The ladies escaped, but were accompanied by a page, who, instead of conducting them to Bayonne, as he was ordered, carried off the Lady Elvira to Hendaye. Whether this was done by Cueva's orders or not I cannot learn. A report has just arrived, which says the Page proved false to all parties, and wished to retain the fair captive in his own hands, and that Cueva was about to march against him in order to obtain possession of the beautiful lady. But let us hope for the best; and we will now proceed at once to Fontarabia, where we shall soon be joined by a strong reinforcement from Pampeluna, and from thence we can watch the pro-

ceedings at Hendaye, and be near at hand to take advantage of whatever may occur.*

We left poor Elvira in the power of Rudolf, who was beginning to relent on witnessing her distress. His heart smote him for having indulged the selfish passion that had plunged the whole country in war. At last, his good feeling prevailed, and Rudolf vowed to save her; but fate seemed to have decreed that his iniquitous designs should succeed. He had no sooner resolved to give himself up, and endeavour to unite her with Don Garcia, than he descried Beltran de Cueva's forces approaching. In a moment they surrounded the town, and all chance of escape was cut off. His agony may then be imagined. He had sacrificed his own love in vain, for she must inevitably fall into the hands of one so utterly unworthy to possess such a treasure. In despair, he went and threw himself at her feet, and avowed all his diabolical designs.

The room in which he had imprisoned her

* The position of Fontarabia and Hendaye can be seen in the view I have given in the Frontispiece, and the following part of this story will then be better understood.

overlooked the river, and from the window they could plainly distinguish the town of Fontarabia on the opposite side of the Bidasoa, and saw the banners of Garcia waving over his father's castle.

"Is there no means of sending a messenger across the water?" inquired the horror-stricken Elvira; "or could we not escape there ourselves?"

"The quay is already in possession of the rebels," said Rudolf; "and the current is so strong, that no one has ever been known to swim across at high water."

Poor Elvira, in the midst of all this distress, felt some consolation in seeing Don Garcia's banner on the opposite bank of the river, and to know that he at least was safe.

"They are battering down the outer gate!" exclaimed Rudolf, almost frantic with terror; "and, oh, agony! what is worse, there is treachery among us; for I see our people have opened the inner entrance to the base Cueva, and I alone am here to defend you from his odious presence!

Elvira implored him to plunge a dagger in her heart sooner than allow her to fall into Cueva's hands.

"It shall pass through my own heart first!" said the unfortunate Page. "Yet, stay; I will make one last, though I fear hopeless, attempt to save thee!" So saying, with an almost supernatural strength, which despair gave him, he wrenched from the window the iron bars, exclaiming, "God grant I may yet be able to save thee!" The next moment he took her in his arms, and jumped into the water below; it was a fearful height. No traces of them appeared; but Rudolf still retained a firm hold of Elvira, and they soon rose to the surface of the water. "Thank Heaven!" he thought, "no one has discovered us," though the battlements above were crowded with troops.

In the meantime Beltran de Cueva had entered the prison, and was furious at not finding the prize for whose possession he had plunged the whole country in war.

"Ha! the bars gone! They must have drowned themselves in the river below. No! What is that I see in the water? Ha! there are two heads!—fire—fire from the battlements! Point every weapon against them! She shall die rather than fall again into Don Garcia's power. And he, too, has escaped! His cursed

banner is waving over his castle. Fire—fire for your lives, base villains! What! has not your shot yet reached the fugitives?" Then, running up to the battlements, Cueva, whose aim had never been known to fail, himself pointed a cannon.

In the mean time Don Garcia, who had anxiously watched the castle at Hendaye, which he knew contained his beloved Elvira, perceived what had taken place. "Quick—a boat!" he exclaimed; "let us hasten to save them!" In a few moments Don Garcia was rowing towards the Page, who with his precious burden had hitherto escaped the shots, but he was almost exhausted in contending against the strong current. It was then that Cueva fired the fatal cannon; the shot reached the heroic Page.

"They sink!" exclaimed Don Garcia, whose boat had now approached near. "Yet see, they rise again! He holds her still—but, alas! the water is stained with blood; and that base Cueva is firing still! Pull—pull for your lives! See, he is sinking again!"

Rudolf was indeed mortally wounded; but with that superhuman energy which a strong

and, above all, a good motive gives, he was able still to keep his lovely burden above the water. Firmly he holds her—but now he can scarcely stem the current. More shots fall in the water close around him. At that moment he descried the boat. One more effort, gallant Page! It was his last!—but at that moment the boat reaches him. He feels that Elvira is taken from his feeble grasp—he sees her clasped in Don Garcia's arms. She is safe—she opens her eyes.

"Forgive me!—and may you both be happy!" were the last words uttered by the dying Page.

All efforts to restore him to consciousness were fruitless, but his countenance looked in death more calm than it had for many a day: it bore even a blissful expression, for he had seen that Elvira was happy. And long she remained so, and enjoyed perhaps more positive bliss than falls to the lot of most mortals.

Count Montreal lived long enough to see the sons of his beloved daughter take a glorious part in the successful war against the Moors under Ferdinand and Isabella, the united sovereigns of Aragon and Castile. The mild yet firm sway

of these wise rulers soon restored peace to the countries along the frontiers of France; and Urtubi Castle was no more molested by hostile bands, nor the country desolated by border warfare.

CHAPTER XIII.

Historical account of Bayonne—Excursion to Cambo—Roland and his exploits.

Just returned from a pretty walk to the old church at the little inland village of Biaritts, which is detached from the sea-port. The church is said to have been built by the English, when they had possession of Bayonne, and the interior is in a good style of Gothic. On one of the clustered columns is a projection, with date 1541, which was probably added afterwards. From the church-yard there is a beautiful inland view of the Pyrenees; near it are some pretty country houses, with their groves and gardens—their southern-looking green balconies and their flat and terraced roofs. Nothing can be cleaner or more cheerful than the appearance of the houses and cottages in this part of the country: the

walls are as white as snow, and the blinds, balustrades, and under-part of the broad projecting roofs are painted a fresh and vivid green. In those which are partly built of timber, the wood is painted of a rich brown, and the roofs of all are covered with reddish tiles.

We often drive over to Bayonne, and we have been reading, with great interest, some histories of that curious old place.

Bayonne was the ancient Lapurdum. Here St. Leon, having with his breath overthrown the statue of Mars, converted, by this miracle, the Basques to Christianity: he was put to death by the Norman pirates, whose depredations he attempted to suppress. They beheaded him. "But," says the legend, "like St. Denis, Sainte Valerie, and others, his body remained standing, and he even took up his head, and walked with it in his hand, for eighty paces." This took place in the beginning of the tenth century.

In 1132, William, Duke of Guienne, enlarged the town, and changed its name to Baia-on-a. (Bonne-baie.) By the marriage of Elinor of Guienne with King Henry II., Duc d'Anjou, afterwards King of England, it fell into the hands of the English. It was greatly favoured

by our monarchs, and attained to a state of great prosperity; its war contingent was twenty vessels and ten galleys, and it is recorded that a fleet of Bayonnais, English, and Irish ships, gained a victory over the Normans. In 1451, Count Dunois drove out the English, and thus completed the conquests of Charles VII.

Francis I. slept here on the 15th March, 1526, on his return from captivity in Spain. On the 22nd of March, 1529, Anne de Montmorency, Grand Maitre et Marechal de France, arrived at Bayonne, to pay to the deputies of Charles V. 1,200,000 crowns in gold, the ransom agreed on for Francis I. It was discovered that the crowns were not of the weight agreed upon, "onze deniers et seize grains." This was a trick attributed to the Chancellor Duprat. Montmorency had, in consequence, to add 40,000 crowns.

When all was arranged, and the treasure exchanged for the hostages, the sons of Francis, accompanied by Eleanor the Queen Dowager of Portugal, and eldest sister of Charles V., the fiancée of Francis, arrived at Bayonne, on the 2nd of July, 1530, and a magnificent fête was given, for their reception.

The history of the massacre of St. Bartholo-

mew is curiously connected with Bayonne. The idea is said to have had its rise from a conversation between Catherine de Medici and the famous Duke of Alba, during a magnificent fête given on a visit of Charles IX., who was making a progress through the southern provinces of the kingdom.

Catherine took this opportunity to have an interview with her daughter, Elizabeth, Queen of Spain, and whilst the gentlemen and ladies of the two courts, disguised as shepherds and shepherdesses, were making a promenade en bateau on the Adour, to the Isle de Rol, Catherine and the Duke were thinking of the means of destroying the Huguenots,—when the Duke made use of the celebrated words, seven years afterwards remembered by Catherine—"Dix mille grenouilles ne valent pas la tête d'un saumon."

The massacre took place on the 23rd June, 1565. But if the horrible thought had its origin here, so here, also, its execution first received a check, in the fine answer given by the Governor, Viscount Orthez, when he received instructions for the murder of the Protestants of Bayonne—

"Sire, I conveyed your majesty's commands

to the inhabitants and garrison of Bayonne. I have found amongst them only good citizens, and brave soldiers; but not one executioner." (" Pas un bourreau.")

In 1706, Bayonne afforded an asylum to the exiled widow of Charles II., King of Spain; she lived here till 1738, and expended her pension of 400,000 ducats. She built the Château of Marrac, afterwards celebrated as the residence of Napoleon.

Bayonne was the scene of revolutionary occurrences, and suffered much under Robespierre. After the elevation of Napoleon, it became the passage of his troops into Spain. In talking of Napoleon, M. Morel has a good remark, I rather think I have seen it before; but here it is well put—" Dans les époques de lutte et de travail social, la fortune et la puissance appartiennent à celui qui a choisi un but, *qui en à conscience,* et qui dévoue à ce but son intelligence et son énergie. Voyez Rome, Mahomet, Charlemagne, Napoleon, s'ils n'avaient pas tous un but, et une croyance en quelque sorte fataliste dans ce but?"

This is very true, particularly the necessity of being aware of the motive; I believe many who

have a motive fail, from want of the consciousness of it.

On the 14th April, 1808, Napoleon arrived at Bayonne, and soon after, took up his residence at the Chateau de Marrac, which he purchased, with some land adjoining. Ferdinand VII. and his brother, Don Carlos, arrived at Bayonne on the 26th April. He soon found the result of his foolish confidence; he was offered the crown of Etruria in exchange for that of Spain, which he refused. Godoy, the Prince of Peace, arrived on the 26th, and four days afterwards, Charles IV. and his queen, Marie-Louise.

Immediately after his arrival, Charles paid Napoleon a visit at Marrac; an interesting anecdote is related concerning this visit. Charles had a sore leg, which made him lame. As he ascended the staircase, leaning on Napoleon's arm, he said—"Soutenez-moi, mon frère, j'en ai besoin." Napoleon answered, with a smile—"Appuyez-vous, et ne craignez rien, je suis fort." The 6th of May, Ferdinand restored the crown of Spain to his father, Charles IV., who, by a treaty executed the day before, disposed of it in favour of Napoleon.

On the 6th of June, Napoleon proclaimed his

brother Joseph King of Spain. Charles IV. retired to Compiegne, with a pension of £300,000 a-year. Ferdinand to Valençay, with an allowance of £40,000. Joseph arrived from his kingdom of Naples on the 7th. At his interview with Napoleon, the latter concluded his reasons for the change, by saying — "D'ailleurs ces arrangemens terminent nos querelles de ménage, je donne Naples à Lucien."

On our way to Cambo, we passed the ruins of Marrac, once the scene of so much splendour, and of so many important events,—now, the remains of the shell gives some idea of what it was. Our coachman was gardener there, and says it was fitted up with great magnificence. On the restoration of the Bourbons, the handsomest part of the furniture was removed, and the castle, according to the gardener's account, set fire to and destroyed. Napoleon was a great patron of Bayonne, and many of its embellishments owe their origin to him.

Thursday, 17.—We made an excursion yesterday to Cambo, a pretty little mineral watering place in the mountains, about two hours and a half's drive on the other side of Bayonne. The road lies through a rich and woody country,

full of fig-trees and Indian corn, and the smell of hay, which the peasants were making under and between high trelliced vines, was delicious. The bright red petticoats and blue jackets of the women, with the yellow handkerchief worn by some on the head, looked very picturesque, as seen through the green vines. The village of Cambo stands partly on a high terrace overlooking the river Nive, and an irregular street of broad-roofed and balconied houses slopes down to a wooden bridge.

The house which contains the spring and baths (and where there is also, I believe, a good hotel) is at some distance from the town, and we walked to it through a wood of fine chesnut trees. The mountain range behind is very beautiful, but the houses have their backs turned to it, and only look down upon the little narrow valley, which is indeed adorned by the river Nive winding through fertile fields, but does not possess much feature or beauty.

We had a very good dinner at a little, clean, homely sort of inn, and brought home a loaf of excellent household bread—a very rare luxury in France.

In the mountains beyond Cambo is a place

called Le Pas de Roland, where there is a rock marked by a gigantic foot-print, said by the peasants to be that of Roland. How all these sort of superstitions resemble each other in different countries! A little beyond it, on the Spanish side of the mountain, is the celebrated vale of Roncesvalles. This was the road by which the famous Roland led the hitherto victorious army of France towards the fatal plain of Roncesvalles. I could fancy the brilliant cortège winding through these romantic defiles, and thought of the various songs and legends which describes the battle :—

" Say, whither are bound these illustrious knights,
The pride and the glory of France?
In defence of his country, its laws, and its rights,
Each paladin takes up his lance.
And foremost is Roland, whose scimitar keen
The harvest of war prostrate leaves;
While, led to the slain by its glittering sheen,
Death gathers them up in his sheaves.
Shout, comrades, shout!
Roland, famous in story;
And your war-cry give out
For our country and glory!

" On our frontier the Saracen armies extend
Their legions in splendid array;
The unnumber'd bands, from the hills that descend,
Their menacing banners display.

'Tis the foe!—'tis the foe! Sons of France, spring to arms
And drive back the barbarous horde!
To them, not to us, will the fight bring alarms;
Brave Roland has ask'd for his sword.
Shout, comrades, shout! &c.

" On, onward with Roland, to honour and fame—
Glory's waving her flag by his side,
And those who would gain an illustrious name
Must follow his plume as their guide.
On—onward, to share in his glorious career!
He stops not to number the foe;
Till, cleft by his sabre, or pierced by his spear,
Their bravest and best are laid low.
Shout, comrades, shout! &c.

" How many? how many? the coward may ask,
As he lurks in his covert secure;
But perilous odds urge the brave to their task,
And danger itself is a lure.
To Roland the number of foes is unknown;
To count them he never is found,
Until, at the close, by his might overthrown,
They lie stark and stiff on the ground.
Shout, comrades, shout! &c.

" Once more rings the blast of the paladin's horn,
As he rallies our wavering bands;
But, pierced by a shaft, to the earth he is borne—
His life-blood is clotting the sands.
Still faithful to honour, he heeds not the pain,
But smiles with a welcome to death;
While high o'er the tumult is heard the proud strain,
Which he shouts with unfaltering breath:—

Swell, comrades, swell
The loud chant of my story;
Sing how nobly I fell
For my country and glory!*

In later days, too, these narrow defiles were trod, and with better success, by a warrior not less illustrious than Roland. It was through the passes leading to Roncesvalles that our valiant Black Prince went to assist Don Pedro of Castile against his usurping brother, Henry,† and shortly afterwards gained the victory of Navarète. In that glorious battle, which reinstated Don Pedro on his throne, Prince Edward took the brave Du Guesclin prisoner:—

"'Twas on the field of Navarète,
When Trestamare has sought
From English arms a safe retreat,
Du Guesclin stood and fought:
And to the brave Black Prince alone
He yielded up his sword."‡

The victorious prince and his celebrated captive returned by the same road, accompanied

* From Bentley's Miscellany.

† It was the same Don Pedro whose marriage with Edward's beautiful sister Joanna, had been so fearfully interrupted by her sudden death at Bayonne.

‡ From Milnes's Breton ballad, which describes the interesting manner in which Du Guesclin was ransomed.

by the King of Navarre as far as Roncesvalles; "whence," says Froissart, "the Black Prince continued his march to Bayonne, where he was received with great joy. He remained there four days to repose and recruit himself."

La Grotte d'Isturitz and the church at Itxatsou, further among the mountains, are said to be worth seeing.

The little church-yard of Cambo is beautifully adorned with flowers—each grave surrounded by a well-kept little garden; and its position on the terrace at the entrance of the village is very pretty. On a woody height at our right going there, the driver pointed out a little rustic chapel, where, he says, a hermit has lived for a great many years.

Sunday, 20th June,—Biaritts.—There is a fair here to-day, and a number of peasants are come from different parts of the country, dressed in their gayest attire—many in white; with the red bands on their heads arranged with much taste, and two long curls of dark hair on each side of the face. Several are now sitting under our windows; and I observed that here, as at St. Sebastian, the men and women keep in separate groups, and seldom speak to each other.

Nothing can be more beautiful than the view from the old light-house here, when the mountains are clear. At sun-set this evening we could distinguish the coast of Spain as far as Bilbao.

" Serene and sweet the lovely landscape lay
Outstretch'd beneath a summer's glancing ray;
And from blue skies a fost'ring sun like ours,
Swell'd in the fruits, and glitter'd in the flow'rs.
Above, the silent mountains stood on high,
Their outline graved distinct along the sky;
And forests stretch'd their undulating wreath,
Above the vales that smiling slept beneath;
While far away the breath of fresh perfume
Pass'd on the breeze which rose from western caves,
And o'er the glow of summer's form and bloom,
Calm ocean's voice came up from slowly-moving waves."*

* From "V's" beautiful poem—" I watched the Heavens."

CHAPTER XIV.

Journey to Pau—Orthez—The court of Gaston de Foix—Pleasant society at Pau—The Moon of the South.

Pau, Saturday, June 26.—A sad event has happened since I last opened this diary—we have lost our darling little dog Frisk. One moment deprived us of our dear companion—that creature of life and joy, the very essence of affection,—and all centered in us; but it is too painful to write or think of. This loss has upset all our plans; it induced us to leave Biaritts suddenly, and here we are seeking for distraction and excitement in new scenes. The lovely scenery we passed through yesterday on our way from Bayonne, the range of snow mountains, the old towns of Peyrehorade, Puyoo, and Orthez, even the first glimpse of the old chateau of Henri IV., failed to excite as much pleasure as they otherwise would have

done. But I will try to relate some of the particulars of our journey, for it was through a country too interesting not to be noticed.

We started from Bayonne for Pau at ten minutes before eight, and reached it at five; thus doing the 105 kilometres, upwards of sixty-eight miles, in nine hours and ten minutes. Heavy showers occasionally occurred, and the weather became so cloudy as to shut up the view of the higher mountains, and thus deprive the landscape of its chief attraction: still, enough was left to make it very beautiful, and occasional glimpses shewed us what the scenery would be with the high chain exposed. We had an opportunity of judging of the fine position of Bayonne this morning, with the mountains clear. The view, soon after leaving the town, from the Pau road, was very beautiful, and, for the first time, the snow mountains were distinctly visible; they soon became clouded. We passed a nice campagne commanding this fine view: the river is an interesting feature in the foreground —as is the Pic du Midi in the distance. Before descending to the Adour the view must be fine; it was in a great measure hidden from us. The river, which is crossed by a good modern bridge,

is here, as it appeared to me, a broader stream than at Bayonne.

At Peyrehorade, which is on the Gave, there is a bridge over the river, here a fine stream, and near it is an interesting old castle, now, I believe, a poor-house. Its position is good, over the river; and the terrace of a little garden we walked to, commands a fine view. On the height above, are the remains of an ancient castle. All this country is very highly cultivated, and the rich green of the Indian corn contrasts well with the yellow tints of the wheat, fast advancing to maturity. After ascending a côte beyond Peyrehorade, we came to a pretty maison de campagne, commanding a rich and extensive view of the course of the Gave and the range of mountains. In the villages, the St. John garlands are universal: these garlands are made of flowers gathered on St. John's eve, and, being blessed by the priest, are suspended to the barn-door, where they remain until replaced by a fresh one on the following year, and are supposed to have the effect of protecting the crop.

The little town of Orthez, famous for its ancient splendour when the residence of the Counts of Foix, and for its battle in 1814, may claim for

its neighbourhood the character of peculiar richness, even in this highly cultivated country. It looks very prosperous and happy.

At Orthez, Froissart, that historian whose romantic pages increase so much the interest of this lovely country, put up at the Hotel of the Moon; and he gives a most lively description of the splendour of Gaston, Count de Foix's residence in this town. He remained twelve weeks at the court of the celebrated warrior, and says he had never seen so handsome a prince, "either in the form of his limbs and shape, or in countenance, which was fair and ruddy, with grey amorous eyes, that gave delight whenever he chose to express affection. . . . . He loved earnestly the things he ought to love, and hated those which it was becoming of him to hate, and was a prudent knight, full of enterprise and wisdom." And yet this same valiant and magnificent prince did some things which are rather at variance with our modern ideas of prudence and wisdom. But I will not quote any more of my friend Froissart till we arrive at some of the other places he describes, and reserve the most striking act of Gaston's powerful reign till we

reach the old town of Foix, which we hope to visit.

Indeed, the whole drive was beyond description lovely. No wonder the romantic Froissart should be enchanted with such scenes. He says, in a pastoral composed in honour of Count de Foix, the handsome Gaston Phebus, that being—

> " En beau Pré sert et plaisant
> Par dessus Gave la rivière
> Entre Pau et Ortais seant,"

he saw shepherds and shepherdesses who were conversing of different lords, and the arms they bore. He adroitly makes use of this fiction to name with praise all those from whom he had received any marks of liberality, and terminates his list with the Count de Foix.

The position of Pau deserves its reputation, and in crossing the bridge, we had a good view of its interesting castle. We are lodged here in great comfort. Our rooms (in the Hôtel de France) look upon the promenade and terrace-walk, with the valley beyond—through which the Gave winds—and which is bounded by a range of woody heights; above these are the splendid snow mountains, but they have scarcely been visible since we came, and it has rained

in torrents. This evening, we walked out between the showers, to the old castle, and saw its venerable walls illumined with the rosy hue of sunset. It put me in mind of the old castle at Blois; the form of the upper windows and some of the stone ornaments being very like those of Francis the First's buildings there. The situation, too, is something similar; but this has the advantage of possessing a splendid view from its windows, as well as being a beautiful object in itself. Repairs are going on; and the Duke de Montpensier, who passed here the other day, is said to have expressed disapprobation at their backward state. One great charm of a tour in the Pyrenees to me is, that everything is lovely, but there is not much to be seen—at least, the beautiful spots seem to lie in such a small compass that, with every advantage of variety, there cannot be a great deal of fatigue; and then people do not appear to have such a rage for mountain expeditions here as in Switzerland.* Oh, how painfully I used to be impressed, and reminded of my

* We did not find it so afterwards; on the contrary, the distances are great, there is a great deal to be seen, and the expeditions, too, are numerous and very fatiguing.

bodily weakness, by hearing of all the mountain walks and rides over and through the various cols! The giant feats of delicate-looking women, who were said to be consumptive, and travelling for their health! But I believe consumptive people *can* do more than any others.

Bought a real capuchin and ordered a capulet, as we thought it would be very useful in the mountain tour. We had a beautiful drive to visit the Compte de M—— and M. de C——, at Taillefer. Lovely view back upon the town.

Thursday, *July* 1*st*.—Mountains continue invisible, so we are still here. Every year and every day that I live on amid beautiful scenes, and love, and prosperity, convince me more and more how inadequate are all apparent blessings to endue us with a spirit of happiness where there is a sort of bodily *malaise*, causing a sickness of the soul, which darkens our enjoyment of life's fairest scenes. Ah, what would I give for that sort of buoyant health of mind and body that I see glancing in the eyes, and animating every gesture, of those peasant-girls beneath our windows!

Saturday, *July* 3.—After writing the foregoing

melancholy bit, I went to call on the Marquesa de N——, a most interesting person. Her husband is nephew to the brave Palafox, Duke of Saragossa. She is very beautiful, and has had a long and severe illness, which seems to have left her more like a creature of a better world than an inhabitant of this. She appears full of the good and beautiful thoughts with which a long life of suffering in this world prepares the favoured children of God's love for the enjoyment of a glorious eternity; and yet she has all the playful cheerfulness of a young child whose mirth has never been dimmed by a shadow of grief. She gave me a most interesting description of her illness, and what miseries her friends underwent when travelling with her in Spain, in the midst of the war. She did not suffer, she said, with great naïveté, because she felt already half in the next world, and therefore was indifferent to all the temporal dangers which surrounded them.

We were at her house last night, and met there her handsome and charming sister, the Marquesa Q——, and many other Spaniards, who seemed to be very original and captivating. Round the room were groups of pretty women—

some at work, some sitting near the windows, looking out on the beautiful moon, and lovely view which it illumined. One was standing out on the balcony, leaning over it in a truly Spanish attitude, and holding her fan with the peculiar grace which belongs to that country of romance. The whole scene recalled to my mind the stories I have read, and the pleasant dreams I have imagined, of serenades and romantic lovers, of cruel parents and cross duennas. Then we had music, too: modinhas and boleros sung by beautiful voices, and with that peculiar union of grace and force so striking in the national airs of Spain, but an expression which strangers can seldom give.

There is a sort of confiding affection shewn almost at first sight by most of the Spaniards I have seen which is very captivating, and further removed from our English reserve than what we see in other foreigners. Any and every day, from twelve o'clock till two, or from eight in the evening till half-past ten, will that fascinating creature be glad, she says, to see us. How few English would say as much to their dearest friends! The society of Pau is very agreeable: the beautiful Madame de M—— called on us

the day before yesterday, and Madame de C—— and her pretty daughter yesterday.

Sunday, 4th.—The mountains here are like dear friends, to which we can run when in sorrow,—sure to find consolation and peace in contemplating their mysterious and dreamy recesses, and pure, eternal-looking summits.

Last night, they were illuminated by the brightest and most glowing moon I have ever seen. Its colour was much warmer as well as more brilliant, but I am not sure that I liked it so well as the pure white, and perhaps spectral-looking rays, it gives us in the north, and which are hallowed by early associations, and by the remembrance of Gothic arches and ruined cloisters. In our land, the moonbeams have certainly a more solemn air; they seem to me to be the light of the dead, and I always feel that the spirits of those dear ones who are gone visit me in their rays.

The last two days have been very hot, but our apartment has, fortunately, rooms looking on three different aspects; so we contrive to run away from the sun as it comes round the house. Our south windows command lovely views over gardens, valleys, and mountains, which we can

enjoy, free from sun, mornings and evenings; those to the west look on the promenade, and are shaded by its lime-trees, now in full bloom, so that we are not obliged to close the outer blinds, and have thus the uninterrupted enjoyment of fresh air, delicious perfumes, and besides, the amusement of looking at the various groups of promenaders, who luxuriate beneath the shade. Fortunately, few carriages come there, so we are free from any noise but the pleasant sounds of children at play, or, now and then, that of a guitar or strolling musician.

Then our dining room is to the north, and looks upon the large court and other buildings of the hotel; there we see the arrivals and departures of all sorts of vehicles, from the well-appointed carriage to the little rickety car, destined for bad roads, and mountain expeditions; and the curious little vinaigrettes in which people drive about the streets of Pau. Here, too, we see the various operations that go on in the out-of-door life of these climates, and which afford an endless variety of interesting pictures. Peasants, in their mountain costume, bringing vegetables and milk to sell; the hotel-girls in their less national, but equally pretty

and coquettish attire; and couriers, with their consequential air, and approving nods of condescension, are the leading features of the scene. This morning there was an inspection of a regiment, and we had the enjoyment of hearing its band under the lime-trees. To-morrow we are to start for the mountains, and dive into the blue recesses of those lovely forms we have admired so much.

"Go, travel 'mid the hills! The summer's hand
Hath shaken pleasant freshness o'er them all.
Go, travel 'mid the hills! There, tuneful streams
Are touching myriad stops invisible;
And winds, and leaves, and birds, and your own thoughts,
(Not the least glad) in wordless chorus, crowd
Around the thymele* of Nature."†

* The central point of the choral movements in the Greek theatre.

† Miss Barrett. Beginning of a sea-side meditation.

CHAPTER XV.

Journey to Bagnères de Bigorre—Lourdes and its Castle—Montrejean—Bagnères de Luchon—Terrific storm and fire.

Tuesday, 6th July,—Bagnères de Bigorre.—Hotel de France, the nicest we have been in since Angoulême; and, oh, how much happiness—at least, to an invalid—depends upon the hotel! The English are reckoned by foreigners foolishly fastidious and particular about their comforts at hotels. "It is so odd," said a pretty little French lady, the other day, "that the English, who travel more than any other nation, should be so much more particular about their comforts." But it strikes me that this is the very reason. The Englishman travels for pleasure, and therefore comforts are essential. The usual object of foreigners when they travel, is to reach some particular place; and the short duration of their journeys

makes inconveniences of less consequence. But when we come to pass a year or two on the road, when we *live* at hotels, it is of much greater importance that they should be good.

Another universal advantage of good inns arises from the fact that we are much more affected at first by the aspect of the rooms we inhabit, than we ever are afterwards; we soon get accustomed to, and almost cease to *see*, the objects which surround us; but the first two or three days we are positively influenced by them.

Long life then, to good inns, and prosperity to the Hotel de France, at Bagnères de Bigorre, with its pretty garden and sweet flowers, and its cheerful corner-room, where I am now sitting. Near me are two windows—one looks up a little street containing a few detached neat houses, with green blinds, terraced roofs, and little pinnacled towers, which have a pleasant, luxuriant air; above them, and at the end of the street, is the mountain. It rises abruptly, close to the town, and is covered with large chesnuts and beeches; I see walks and narrow paths winding up in various directions, inviting one to explore the cool and umbrageous recesses, and enjoy the beautiful view they must command.

All this sounds cheerful, and so it is, in spite of a heavy rain which keeps us at home, and affords me the delicious repose of a soft, red velvet chair, worked footstool, and polished mahogany table, covered with some new Spanish books, and some favourite old volumes, which I love better than most things. Now and then, I have an idle peep out of the window on the various groups of peasants, with their red capulets or brown capuchins. A stream rushes down through this said little street—a mountain torrent, fresh, sparkling, and wild, as the scenes from which it comes, but here enclosed within two walls, with an opening near each end, where the laundresses of the town pursue their avocation, and a little further on the stream becomes a bath for horses and pigs.

My bed-room opens into this apartment, and looks out on the garden, at the end of which is a curious and beautiful tower, slender and lofty as a minaret; of architecture, half Gothic and half Moorish, with a light, airy gallery at the top, and a large bell, supported by wrought iron, over it, forming a sort of transparent crown, and striking the hours with a sound peculiarly melodious and strange.

It would appear from all this that I was very much pleased with Bagnères—yet, on the contrary, I am rather disappointed; for a French gentleman described it to me as "une petite Athenes—une ville si mignonne, tout pleine de jolies maisons." In vain we have tried to discover any resemblance to Athens. The approach, indeed, is very pretty; for the minaret sort of tower I have just mentioned, and the tall spire of the Gothic church, are two striking features; these, with a splendid background of mountains, a fertile plain in front, and woody hills on either side, form a beautiful picture; but once entered, Bagnères resembles most common French towns in its narrow streets and not very gay shops.

It has two or three small irregular *places*. In the centre of one is a nice promenade, shaded by trees. It contains some good houses; those on one side have little terraced gardens before them, under which are shops the gayest in the place—most of them being devoted to the sale of the tricoterie de Bagnères, a worsted-work of fine texture, and great variety of pattern and colour, aprons, shawls, coverlids, caps, are worked in flowered patterns of great beauty.

We walked round and through the town. A

remarkably pretty girl, the daughter of a book-seller, tempted us to add to our stock of Spanish books.

The road we travelled to-day, on our way from Pau, lies, as far as Lourdes, through scenery the perfection of loveliness. At Lestelle, the first post, we went into the church. It is well situated, at the foot of a woody height, near a rushing stream, and a bridge, whose single arch is adorned with festoons of the most luxuriant ivy. The interior of the church is very gorgeous. The altars richly gilt, and galleries resembling those we saw in the Spanish churches. The outside is odd and grotesque, adorned with statues in niches, Roman columns, and an old French roof, something like that of the Tuileries.

The approach to Lourdes is very beautiful, and its old castle is a striking object. On the heights behind are considerable quarries of slate and marble.

An interesting anecdote of fidelity in the commandant of this castle is related. It belonged to the English until the treaty of Bretigny, and was besieged by the Duc d'Anjou, in 1374. It was valiantly defended by Armand de Bearn,

whose liege lord was the Count de Foix, and who sent for Armand to induce him to surrender the castle. He obeyed the summons, and, as commanded, went to Orthez, the residence of the Count.

On the third day after his arrival, the Count, before his assembled court, urged Armand to give up the castle; but he remained firm in his refusal, saying that its defence had been committed to him by the King of England, and for him he would retain it as long as he was able. Upon this, the Count drew his dagger, and, before the assembled nobility, who dared not interfere, he struck him with it five times. Upon which Armand exclaimed—"Oh, Monseigneur, vous ne faites pas gentillesse;" and soon after died.

A drive by a capital road, through a rich plain, brought us to Bagnères de Bigorre. In fine weather, when the mountains can be seen, it must be beautiful.

After quitting Lourdes, we had no more mountainous roads and steep precipices, much to the delight of my rebellious nerves. I quite agree with the little French woman who said—"La vue des precipices me fait mal;" therefore,

I pay very dearly for the pleasure of beautiful scenery.

Bagnères, at first sight, is very disappointing: why its architecture should be extolled I cannot conceive. I fancy an Athenian would find some difficulty to discover any resemblance to his celebrated city; and even metaphorically, the "Athens of the Pyrenees" has so little claim to be called so, that one reading establishment, and a very poor bookseller's shop, seem to be its only literary resources.

The costumes are very pretty. The capulets at Pau are white—here they are usually red, and bordered with black velvet. They look very comfortable, and serve as parasol or umbrella, according to the weather.

Wednesday, July 7.—Still cloudy, with frequent showers; but we have had a delightful walk round about the town, and on the heights above it. We looked up the Valley of Campan, and explored some narrow paths in fine chesnut woods and through fields, up the steep sides of the rocky heights towards the Elysée Cotin and the Grotto. We paid some visits, and inspected the baths. In the evening, accompanied by our friends Le Vicomte and Vicomtesse de St. I——,

we went to the marble works, and saw some beautiful specimens of Pyrenean marble: the works are well executed, though we thought them inferior to those at Matlock.

Bagnères de Luchon, July 8, *Hotel du Commerce.*—How much one suffers in trying to be comfortable! Of all miseries, house or lodging-hunting is the greatest. We arrived here after a charming drive through scenery so exquisitely lovely as to baffle description by words or pencil—scenery that makes one feel perfectly happy, imparting a delicious calm—a thorough feeling of contentment, as if in fact nothing could ever again ruffle the temper or excite bad thoughts. Alas, how soon does this blessed frame of mind vanish!—put to flight by the sight of wretched dirty rooms, the noise and bustle of eager washerwomen, horse-dealers, guides, &c., all crowding round us! We agreed that it was impossible to sleep at the inn, so, in an evil moment, commenced the laborious and most embarrassing work of hunting for lodgings. We saw a great number—the price nearly the same—from ten to twelve francs a-day. Most of them looked good, and tolerably well furnished; but we could not

make up our minds, and so here we are in the dirty Hotel du Commerce.

The first aspect of this town is unpromising—dark, unpainted shutters, glassless windows, and narrow streets; but soon the scene changes on arriving at the modern part, where the lodging-houses are: these are really very pretty dwellings, of tasteful architecture, and with the avenue of fine lime-trees between them, must have, in sunshine, a cheerful and inviting air.

Friday, 9.—After all our trouble, we have succeeded in getting a most comfortable, well-furnished new apartment, and I am sitting on a red velvet sofa, near a polished satin-wood table, with my feet on an embroidered footstool. I try to read, but the splendid mountain views our windows command, keep my eyes continually turned towards them, and fill my mind with indolent delight. Our bed-room, adjoining this salon, has three large windows, opening on a wide balcony, or rather portico, with an ornamented iron balustrade. The pediment above is supported by four Ionic columns of white stone; blue striped curtains are suspended between them, which have a luxurious and southern look,

and, when closed, form another cool and most delicious room, into which the lime blossoms of the adjoining avenue, d'Etigny, seem to send their sweetest perfumes. This house has also a garden of its own, partly in front of the house and partly running up the steep base of the adjoining mountain, with terraced walks, rows of fruit-trees, and borders of flowers.

Luchon seems to me to possess all the beauties of Bagnères de Bigorre, but on a much grander scale : the mountains, which rise up close behind the town, are of great height, and covered with wood : then the majestic snow mountains of the Port de Venasque are seen in most of the views ; indeed, they are visible from almost every house we have been in. Yet, with all this beauty, I have met with two or three people who were disappointed in Luchon, and maintain that the environs of Bigorre are more beautiful. I cannot imagine how any one can find the scenery of Luchon less beautiful than they expected, unless it be that its valley is perhaps still more lovely, about three or four miles before one arrives at the town. There are more old castles and villages perched on apparently inaccessible and detached heights ; the gigantic masses of rock are thrown

about in more picturesque groups; there is, in fact, more variety, and the scenery has a more peculiar and striking character. But here, too, it is beyond description lovely and grand; and I never met with a comfortable dwelling in such beautiful scenery before. It puts me more in mind of the finest parts of the Tyrol—of the scenery between Innspruch and Bolzen—than of any other place.

The costume of the peasantry is very pretty. The women wear light blue capuchons, lined with red; the men, scarlet caps and embroidered jackets, with a red scarf tied round the waist, and the ends hanging down on one side. We first saw this scarf some posts on the other side of Bordeaux, and I have seen it often in all the places we have since visited.

But I must say something of our journey to this place. We left Bigorres about seven yesterday morning, and wound up the heights leading to Escalledieu (the first post) in brilliant sunshine. We had a fine view over the town and up the valley of Campan, and of the range of snow mountains crowned by the Pic du Midi. After passing Escalledieu—a curious old convent, now a comfortable chateau—the road is through a

more bare and uninteresting country; but we had splendid views of the snow mountains—often of the whole range, from the distant heights near Pau, in the north, to the Maledetta range and other mountains of Spain in the south. Montrejean is a curious Spanish-looking old town, full of carved black timber; roads all excellent, and posting good.

We passed, near St. Bertrand de Comminges, on our right, a curious old town, with a fine church nestled under the higher mountains.

The drive from Montrejean here is through scenery much more beautiful than any I have seen in the Pyrenees; indeed, I think it was the most lovely drive I ever had. The views up the valley, to Luchon, are terminated by the Port de Venasque and part of the Spanish range of mountains about the Maledetta, the highest and most snowy of all the Pyrenees; then the woody heights, or rather mountains, on each side of the road, are covered with trees to the very summit,—old castles, standing on rocky points, command narrow passes, or overlook wilder parts of the valley; and the rushing Garonne, already a fine river, plays no inconsiderable part in the landscape.

Saturday, 10.—A dreadful storm of thunder and lightning yesterday evening—and just as the sky began to clear and the thunder only growled among distant mountains, we were alarmed by the cry of *fire*, and saw flames rising up behind the houses which face this. The large establishment of baths was burning, and for three or four hours the sight was magnificent. The woods and rocks on either side of the valley were brilliantly illuminated, a lurid glare shone even upon the more distant snow mountains, and sparks flew up to an immense height, and came down like showers of rubies among the green trees and gardens. But the fatigue of house-hunting, unpacking, making ourselves uncomfortable, &c., so fatigued me, and the thunderstorm had already made me rather nervous, so that fear and awe were the predominant feelings excited by the splendid conflagration—and I could scarcely admire it.

Fortunately, a heavy rain had fallen during the storm, and there was no wind, or the ponderous wooden roofs and balconies of the older houses in the town might have caught fire. We remained at the windows, fascinated by the

awful sight, till about twelve o'clock, when it was nearly spent, and there was no excuse for not going to bed. But I could not sleep: the thunder again began to growl, and the lightning was so vivid, that I started up from bed several times with the frightful impression that our very rooms were on fire.

I like to live on a height. Valleys, however high in themselves, if bounded by very lofty mountains, are rather gloomy, and give one the feeling of imprisonment. Hence it is that Bigorres, though far less beautiful, is no doubt a more cheerful residence than Luchon. We certainly see this place under every disadvantage, owing to wet weather and awful storms; and, strange to say, our mountain expeditions are as much impeded by bad weather here as in Scotland or Ireland. The beau ideal of a southern climate is not often realized, and we are disposed to find far too much fault with our own, and particularly with that of poor dear Ireland. I can state as a positive fact that, during the various wild and mountain expeditions we made in the south and west of Ireland, during the year 1838, there were not more than six days in which the

bad weather at all incommoded us ; whereas, in this greatly-extolled south of France, we have had almost constant rain or storms ever since our arrival at Bayonne, about six weeks ago.

During our expedition in Spain to St. Sebastian, we had rain. In our fortnight's residence at Biaritts, the mountains were very seldom visible, and it was so cold, that I was obliged to have recourse to some of my winter clothing. During the eleven days we were at Pau, the mountains were only clear during a part of one, and in our day's journey from Bayonne to Pau, and the day from Pau to Bigorre, no mountain-tops were visible. The days we spent at Bigorre were likewise showery and dark, and it was only on the morning we left it that the snow mountains appeared.

Two o'clock.—We thought the rain had ceased, and so sallied forth, armed luckily with umbrellas. I had a great longing to explore one of those inviting little paths we see from our windows, and which run in all directions along the precipitous sides of the mountain. To reach it, we went through the old part of the town, which is very gloomy, and soon after we began to clamber, the rain came on. The path was rugged

and disagreeable, here and there washed away by mountain torrents, so that sometimes we could scarcely find any footing; in short, this my beau ideal of a pleasant walk evaporated, like most others, in clouds, which prevented our seeing anything but the brambles and walls of rock on one side, and on the other they veiled the depths of the precipice, down which not to tumble required all our attention, (what a German-sounding sentence!) Thus we got a good wetting, lost the path, and a black-lace colleret, which hitched in the brambles, without my perceiving it. However, a dear, honest boy ran after us with it, and shewed us the shortest way to get down from our unpleasant situation. I came home very cross, and covered with mud.

I am so thankful to have had pleasant letters this gloomy day! How much do our impressions of places, as well as our real happiness abroad, depend upon the bad or good news we receive in them from our friends at home!

In these parts of the country there is no such thing as "making bargains." I find that the shopkeepers here, unlike those we have often met with in the northern parts of France, never ask more than they mean to take; but they have

a very pretty habit of coaxing their customers, and reconciling them to the price demanded, by adding some little thing as a present to the object in question. Thus I bought some shawls to-day of the Bagnères tricoterie, and the woman in the shop presented me with a pair of very prettily embroidered mittens.

CHAPTER XVI.

Legend of Castel Biel and St. Bertrand de Comminges.

Luchon, Saturday.—Every country has its tale of the influence of ill wishes, and of the destruction of some neighbouring family or castle from the curse of an offended old woman or gipsy; and the romantic valley of Luchon is no exception to the general rule. I rejoiced to find that the legend here relates to my two favourite places, the ruined Castel Bielle, and that beautiful old town, St. Bertrand de Comminges, we saw on our road from Montrejean. I had a long talk with the lady who told it, during our walk to-day, on the effect of ill wishes. She maintains that a strong will or wish *has* an effect—that curses or blessings invoked by a powerful mind have a decided influence on the fate of those who are the objects of them. She believes, too, in

the power of magnetism, and thinks that the fervent prayer of devotees, the will of magnetisers, and the imprecations of violent characters, in past ages, are all of the same nature, and have equal power. She says—"May there not be good and bad spirits always hovering near us, who assist all our strong wishes, either for evil or good?"

As to the truth or falsehood of this theory I shall say nothing, but proceed to relate the lady's romantic tale before it fades from my mind.

CASTEL BIELLE, OR THE EFFECTS OF ILL WISHES.

In the latter part of the eleventh century, when the good St. Bertrand de Comminges caused happiness and peace to reign in this land, this Castel Bielle was the abode of the Lord of Montauban. He was one of those turbulent barons whose evil deeds still dwell in the minds of the surrounding peasantry. His only child, Gonilda, was unlike her father in every respect, being highly revered throughout all the land for her piety and goodness.

It so happened, that in one of her yearly visits

to an old aunt who lived at Leon de Comminges, the fair Gonilda became acquainted with the young Bertrand, who afterwards gave the name of St. Bertrand to that ancient town. He was, indeed, distantly related to her, and though not yet dignified with the title of Saint, he evinced that devoted admiration for whatever is lovely and good which is the first step to perfection. Now the most perfect being he had ever seen was Gonilda, therefore it was no wonder that she should gain his affections, and that his happiest moments were spent in her society.

But all Gonilda's actions were watched by an evil eye. Strange it was that one so fair, so devoted to the happiness of all around, should have excited the ill will of any one. But so it was. The lady of Fronsac hated her, for her father's sake, who had, with the utmost perfidy, won her affections, and then cruelly abandoned her; and she hated Gonilda still more when she saw her in the enjoyment of requited affection.

From her turret chamber, that overlooked the palace inhabited by Gonilda's aunt, she could see the beautiful girl with Bertrand, walking in the gardens, and the Lady of Fronsac was made almost frantic by the sight, and vowed she would

be revenged on the father in his child. She determined that both the lovers should be miserable. There must be a strong power in hate, for as that wicked woman's eyes were fixed upon the young pair, and she muttered curses on their heads, Gonilda trembled, though she saw and heard nothing but the sweet tones of her lover's voice.

"This bliss cannot last!" she said; "our world would be too delightful; it would be—it is even now, heaven to me! No, Bertrand, I feel I never can be yours!"

The young man shuddered as she spoke, and yet endeavoured to cheer her spirits. "Why do you tremble, dearest Gonilda—what is there to fear? Your aunt favours our suit, and your father is too much occupied with war and feasting to make any objection to our wishes."

And so Bertrand tried to reason her fears away; for man ever clings to reason, and is fortunately less influenced by those vague apprehensions or presentiments to which woman is more liable, perhaps from the superior sensitiveness of her nature. Besides, his character, though full of feeling, was prone to look on the sunny side of everything.

"Much mirth he hath, and yet less mirth than fancy;
His is that nature of humanity
Which both ways does redound, rejoicing now,
With soarings of the soul anon brought low:
For such the law that rules the larger spirits.

The richest mirth—the richest sadness, too—
Stands from a groundwork of its opposite;
For these extremes, upon the way to meet,
Take a wide sweep of Nature, gathering in
Harvests of sundry seasons."

Gonilda's fears did indeed seem groundless, for days and weeks passed on, and nothing occurred to interrupt the young people's happiness; on the contrary, the old aunt approved of the match, the father's consent was obtained, and a day fixed for the marriage. It was to be celebrated at Castel Bielle, and the old Baron of Montauban seemed so overjoyed at his daughter's prospects, that he invited all the neighbouring nobles to a grand feast for the occasion.

On the evening before the eventful day, Gonilda went to pray in her oratory. It was still early, but the castle was so full of noise and revelry, that she wished to spend a few hours in retirement, to implore the blessing of God on her approaching nuptials.

The last rays of evening sun shone through

the open casement, and tinged her white dress with its golden hue. Never had she appeared more lovely, and yet no human eye beheld her; no, not even Bertrand's, for he would not venture to intrude. Besides, there was no entrance to this little oratory except through her own sleeping-room; it was, in fact, one of those little projecting oriels we often see in old buildings. All vestiges of it are now gone, but the tower still remains which contained the great staircase leading up to Gonilda's apartments, and a distant view of it is here given. I can imagine the oriel window resembled the one so beautifully described by Keats, in the "Eve of St. Agnes."—

> "A casement high and triple-arched there was,
> All garlanded with carven imageries
> Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
> And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
> Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
> As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
> And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
> And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
> A shielded 'scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings."

Gonilda prayed fervently, and was so absorbed that the sun had set, and the short twilight was nearly gone without her perceiving the change. No doubt, vivid images of the bliss for which she

Sketched by Lady Chatterton and drawn on Stone by Bichebois.

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CASTEL-BIELLE WITH THE PORT DE VENASQUE MOUNTAINS

implored, passed before her, and so bright and all-engrossing were these visions of futurity that she would probably have remained still longer, but that she was startled by the fall of something on her dress, and to her surprise she found it was a letter. How could it have come there? The door was closed and the window high. She looked out through the casement; it was too dark to see any object, yet she thought she heard something rustle in the branches of a tree which overshadowed that part of the castle, and she shuddered as if some evil eye were upon her. The sensation reminded her of that day in the garden at Comminges, when she had told Bertrand of her fears. "How very foolish!" thought she; "perhaps it is some sport of Bertrand's, who may be annoyed at my long absence. The moon will soon appear above yonder mountain; I shall then see what this mysterious letter contains." So Gonilda waited; for her thoughts and prayers, in that little oratory, had been so pleasant that she did not like to leave the hallowed spot.

But now the spell of happiness seemed broken. She tried to pray again, and knelt before the Virgin's shrine, and implored more fervently than

ever the blessings of her heavenly Mother, for a vague sense of terror oppressed her heart. Soon afterwards the moon rose, and, to use the words of Keats—

> "Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
> And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
> As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;
> Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest;
> And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
> And on her hair a glory, like a saint.
> She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
> Save wings, for heaven."

Then Gonilda hastily unfolded the letter. It was fastened with a braid of dark hair, and contained these words:—

"Adored Gonilda,—Danger lurks within the castle; your rejected suitors have vowed that you shall not be mine. On approaching it, I found the gates closed. Breathe not a word of this to any one; but instantly quit the castle by the postern gate, and hasten down to the lowest terrace: there you will find your devoted

Bertrand."

Gonilda had never seen Bertrand's writing, for in those days young people did not keep up much correspondence with each other; but not

a doubt crossed her mind that it could have been written by any one else. It was strange; but still she resolved to obey his wishes, well knowing that her father could scarcely be depended on; and so, without further deliberation, she put on her mantilla, and hastily left the castle. No sooner had she passed through the postern gate, than the bright moonbeams became obscured by heavy clouds, and Gonilda trembled as she descended in darkness to the southern terrace.

In the meantime, Bertrand's visions of future happiness were no less blissful than those of his lovely bride. He did not retire, indeed, to an oratory, but he quitted the boisterous mirth of the banqueting hall, and walked along the forest paths that led up the valley towards Spain. There he prayed, and gave thanks to God for his approaching happiness. He lingered for some time at a lovely spot where the three valleys of Luchon, Lys, and Portalet branch off. There was in those days a lake in the Vallée du Lys of considerable size, whose waters were fed by the fine cascade that may still be seen at its upper end. On the side nearest Castle Bielle the stream emerged from it through a narrow

aperture, where a gigantic rock kept them from overflowing even in winter.

As the young Bertrand stood on the height which overlooked this spot, the thought occurred to him that in case of one of those sudden invasions of the Spaniards that sometimes devastated the valley of Luchon, it might be possible to remove this rock, and thus allow the entire lake of Lys to inundate the plain of Luchon, and make an island of the height on which Castel Bielle was situated. He was the more pleased at this thought as the Baron had expressed an intention of giving up the castle to him, and retiring to pass his old age in peace at Montauban.

Castel Bielle was one of the most unsafe fortresses on the border ; and it often occurred that Gonilda was obliged in the utmost haste to seek for safety with her aunt, at Comminges. Of late, a truce had been proclaimed with the King of Aragon ; but it might not last long, therefore Bertrand thought, with extreme satisfaction, that the labour of one hundred vassals for some days might remove that rock, and render Bielle quite secure. While he was busied with this project, to ensure the happiness and security of his bride, the shades of evening fell—the short

twilight soon ceased, and veiled every object from his view. Soon afterwards, a violent storm came on, and those heavy clouds which had veiled the moonbeams from Gonilda, as she approached the lonely terrace, now came rolling into the valley. The thunder growled in the distance, and then—

"From nearer clouds bright burst more vivid gleams,
As instantly in closing darkness lost;
* * * * * *
Then swells the rolling peal, full, deep'ning, grand;
And in its strength lifts the tremendous roar,
With mingling discord, rattling, hissing, growling,
Crashing, like rocky fragments downward hurled—
Like the upbreaking of a ruined world;
In awful majesty the explosion bursts,
Wide and astounding o'er the trembling land."*

Bertrand sought shelter in one of those little châlets which abound in the Valley du Lys, till he fancied the storm was somewhat abated; he then hurried homewards; but had not proceeded far when a sound, as of many voices, met his ear.

"Hush!" said one of them; "do not make so much noise."

"How foolish!" said another. "What can

* Joanna Baillie.

you fear? The whole castle is buried in merriment and wine, and she will soon arrive. What a glorious plan it was! And how our Prince Louis will thank me for bringing him such a prize—for she is the most beautiful girl in all the four cantons! Ha! ha! how the young bridegroom will storm! But we shall all be safe in Venasque, far out of reach of his fury; besides, even if he discover it, what can he do against a hundred and fifty of us? 'Tis a good number to carry off one poor young girl."

"But are you sure she will fall so easily into our hands? Perhaps, after all, we may have to attack the castle."

"No, no; the old hag of Fronsac knows better what she is about. She has sent a letter, signed by the lover himself, to lure her into our nets. Santa Maria, what a night it is!"

Bertrand listened with dismay. His first impulse was to fly towards the castle, but the flashes of lightning shewed that it would be impossible to traverse the flat open space without being seen by the Spaniards. There was, indeed, a circuit of a mile by which he might reach Bielle; but he reflected with horror that before he could go round all that way, Gonilda might fall into the hands of the enemy. Whilst paus-

ing, irresolute how to act, a sudden thought flashed through his brain. He rushed back to the spot where the huge rock kept in the waters of the lake. "Oh, for the strength of a thousand arms!" thought Bertrand, as, with the energy of despair, he endeavoured to move the huge stone; but he might as well have tried to move the Maledetta itself. "Alas!" thought he, "I can do nothing; and my bride will fall into the hands of those lawless men!"

Bertrand had always been remarkable for his piety and firm belief in the power and goodness of God; and though, at first, despair and apprehension for his loved Gonilda had made him almost blaspheme the Almighty, yet at length better feelings prevailed, and he suddenly threw himself on his knees, and prayed fervently for assistance. In the meantime the storm went on increasing; the thunder roared still nearer and nearer among the mountain tops, and the rocks shook beneath his feet:—

> "Upon the lofty mountain's side,
> The kindled forest blazes wide;
> Huge fragments of the rugged steep
> Are tumbled to the lashing deep;
> Firm rooted in his cloven rock,
> Crashing falls the stubborn oak."*

* Joanna Baillie.

"Oh, that the rocks may fall and crush those base Spaniards!" exclaimed Bertrand, during one of the short pauses of this awful storm. "Oh, that God would cause the lake to break down its barrier and overwhelm them!"

He had no sooner breathed this last prayer, than a noise louder than the thunder was heard, and Bertrand saw the gigantic rock give way. The next moment, the waters rushed out, and Bertrand was hurled along in their impetuous course.

For some instants he lost all consciousness; but, being an experienced swimmer, he soon rose, and the first sound which met his ear were the plaintive tones of Gonilda's voice. The vivid lightning shewed a wide expanse of water, and Bertrand could plainly see that it covered the entire plain between the former lake and Castel Bielle; and therefore the Spaniards, encumbered as they were with heavy coats of mail, must have been crushed to death beneath the rocks, or hurled along by the overflowing lake.

But, alas! had the waters also engulfed his beautiful bride? and whence came those touching accents? Again he hears her voice! Nearer and nearer it sounds as the impetuous current

bears him along. He approaches the western terrace of the castle, which, though formerly on a considerable height, is now very little elevated above the surface of the water. Again all is dark, and he can only hear a low, moaning sound; but certainly it is Gonilda! Another and a louder voice meets his ear: "Thank God," thought he, "she has received assistance from the castle! Yet, hark! what are those angry tones? A woman's voice, too!"

He redoubles his efforts to reach the terrace. Another flash of lightning shews him the fair form of Gonilda, on the brink of the flood, and near her stands the tall figure of the Lady of Fronsac.

Bertrand sees no more—darkness again conceals every object from his view; but angry voices are heard, then a piercing shriek, and a heavy plunge into the water — another flash shews the Lady of Fronsac standing alone upon the brink, a ghastly smile of triumphant malice on her countenance. She gazes on the unbroken surface of the now more tranquil water; no vestige of Gonilda is seen; but Bertrand gains the shore. In a moment he is standing by the Lady of Fronsac.

"Ha!—are you come to seek your bride? Ha! ha!"—and the stern Lady laughed wildly —as she beheld his despair!

But Bertrand heeds her not—a low wailing sound has reached his ear, and he sees a white object at some distance, borne along by the current. Pushing away the Lady of Fronsac, who endeavoured, with all the fury of revenge, to detain him, he rushes again into the lake. In an instant he has reached the spot, and clasps in his arms the beloved object.

"Speak to me, dearest Gonilda! Oh, she is cold—oh, horror, she does not breathe!" He bears her to the terrace, and endeavours by every tender endearment to restore her to life. In vain!

"She is dead!" exclaims the Lady; "and I am revenged; and rejoiced am I that you did not perish too, for now I shall have the gratification of knowing you will be miserable all your life."

Bertrand was indeed miserable—but not through life, for he served God, and devoted all the energies of his powerful mind to the good of

his fellow-creatures. He entered into holy orders, and so high was his reputation for piety and devotion, that, in 1076, he was made Bishop of Comminges; he still continued to live only for others, and to devote the increased means his high position afforded to the happiness of those around him. He died in 1126, and was afterwards canonized. There is scarcely a town or village for miles round whose inhabitants do not still bless his memory. Numerous miracles were performed at his shrine; and it is a well-known fact, that our English Saint Thomas à Becket had such a high opinion of St. Bertrand's powers, that he sent a lady of high rank, who was afflicted with some incurable malady, to visit his tomb at Comminges. The journey, in those days, must have been an affair of no small toil and fatigue; yet the poor lady arrived here safely, was completely cured, and returned home to England, full of gratitude to the pious St. Bertrand.*

The person who suffered most by this sad event was the very one whose early crimes had entailed such a dire vengeance on his child. The unfortunate Baron of Montauban never recovered

* See the History of St. Bertrand de Comminges, p. 26.

the loss of Gonilda. She had been the only thing which seemed to link him with the better part of human nature—in fact, the only object he really loved. From the moment of her tragic end, he gave himself up to despair. Sometimes heading his vassals against the Spaniards, in which he would burn and pillage without mercy; at others, he indulged in wild debauchery with dissolute companions.

He is said to have perished, at last, in the lake, in the very spot where his daughter was drowned, but whether he destroyed himself, or fell in during a fit of intoxication, is not known.

On his death, the Lady of Fronsac seized on his possessions, for which, as he died without an heir, she obtained a grant from the King, and she instantly proceeded to pull down the castle, and destroy the fine terraced gardens which formerly adorned it. So great was her anxiety to leave no vestige of the proud abode of her enemy, that she laboured herself at the work of destruction; and, despising the cautions that were given her by the workmen, she proceeded to undermine the southern tower, the only one which now remains. On she toiled, with a savage smile on her haggard countenance, when

suddenly, a stone on which she stood gave way, and she was precipitated into the lake below.

Her body was never found, and no wonder, for some of the Baron's old vassals whom she had expelled from the castle, and who had been obliged to seek refuge with their former enemies in Spain, maintained, that on the evening she perished, they saw her carried along by the devil, who rode on one of those dark mists which sometimes shroud the mountain-tops. They plainly saw him drag her by the heels as far as the base of the Maledetta, and, with a hideous laugh, cast her into the Trou de Toron, that spot where the Garonne commences its underground course.

In proof of this, they said that the river, even as far as Bordeaux, was black for a whole year afterwards, and would have remained so for ever, had it not been for the fervent prayers of the young man she had so deeply injured. St. Bertrand, at the head of his clergy, made a pilgrimage up the valley of Luchon, rowed along the surface of the new lake, and blessed the Garonne. From this blessing arose the prosperity of those numerous fine towns which are situated on that queen of rivers; but he said nothing of the

mountain from whence the river has its source, and therefore it has ever since borne the name, both in France and Spain, of La Maledetta. It is, then, probably owing to the machinations of the wicked Lady of Fronsac, that the mountain still abounds in evil spirits, that no one has ever reached the summit without meeting with some signal misfortune, and that so many luckless travellers perish in the daring attempt to invade its gloomy solitude.

CHAPTER XVII.

Visit to the Lac d'Oo, or Seculejo—Cascade of Montauban — Ride to the Vallée du Lys — Hopelessly bad weather.

July the 11*th.*—A bright sun cheered us early this morning, and shewed the valley and mountains in all their beauty. We walked across the valley to Montauban, a little village, with its ancient church, and vine-clad cottages, which is situated a short way up the mountain. The church-bell was ringing as we passed, and a procession, headed by the priest, emerged from the rude old porch: the men walked on one side, and the women on the other; each sex making the tour of the church, and meeting again at a cross on the opposite side, where the priest knelt down, and read some prayers, and sang, the people joining in the chant. The music of their voices, and the

bright colouring of their costume in that wild spot were very striking and beautiful: most of the women had small lace caps under their red or white capulets—the old ones only wearing the large and rather heavy capuchin: the predominant colours were red and yellow.

The object of the procession was to place some stones round the foot of an old wooden cross, which seemed in a tottering condition, its foundation having probably been loosened by a storm, or mountain torrent. After the ceremony was over, we ascended a steep path leading up the height towards Spain, which on that side cannot be very far distant, and rambled among the woods far above, resting occasionally, and enjoying the view over Luchon, and the valley on both sides.

Evening.—The town of Luchon is certainly situated in the least pretty part of its lovely valley. This evening, we walked some way up the valley, passing close to its highest village, St. Mamet, and up as far as Castel Bielle, along the road to the Port de Venasque, and talked to a worn and interesting-looking peasant woman, who said she was now so "*maigre*," from grief for her only son, who had been drawn in the Conscription, and was

obliged to join the army. Poor thing! she looked as if she would not have long to deplore her loss. Castel Bielle is certainly a lovely spot, and the old castle, formerly belonging, like all others in these parts, to the English, in a very fine position, evidently placed to protect the fertile plain from incursions of the Spaniards, and, in even earlier times, has stood, as we heard in the legend, many an assault from Moorish warriors, and seen the proud crescent driven back from its walls.

Monday evening, 12*th*.—Started this morning, at nine, for the Lac d'Oo, or Seculejo. W—— on foot, and I on a nice little mountain horse, which carried me very successfully up the steep, and sometimes very narrow paths, and along the sides of awful precipices. The sky was not very clear, but sometimes the clouds rolled up and disclosed large fields of ice among the upper heights, and, I believe, rendered the wild scenes still more grand, from imparting to them an air of mystery, and casting here and there dark masses of shade.

Some of the old castles and villages near which we passed are situated in most romantic and striking positions, particularly that of

Blanquet. It stands on the summit of a stupendous rock, which is detached, near the top, from the mountain, and rises perpendicularly from the valley below. This castle belonged to the English, and must have been most important in old border wars, for it commands the narrow passes into three valleys : as a military post, it occupied a position between the Castel Bielle of the valley of Luchon and the Castel d'Oo. It defended the valley of Guille, which is on the road to Montné, and well worthy of a visit ; the village Corviel, which we saw, is upon the road. We passed the chapel of St. Aventin, who must have been an active fellow, for he jumped, according to tradition, from the Castle Blanquet to the spot where the chapel is built, as the mark of his feet on the rock outside the chapel bears testimony !

This country is thickly inhabited. After three-quarters of an hour, we reached the village of St. Aventin, which contains three hundred inhabitants ; in another quarter of an hour, we passed near Castellon—three hundred and fifty inhabitants ; and then passed through the old village of Cazon ; the guide said part of its church was built by the Romans. We saw some rude carving on

a house, a coat-of-arms, with a stag and hare as supporters; the arms were designedly effaced; they looked like fleurs-de-lis.

We descended its very narrow and ill-paved street, and soon after passed on the right, the direction of the intended new road to Bigorre, and to the Port of La Pierre Sourde. We continued descending in a smiling valley, with carefully-cultivated fields, greatly subdivided—the probable result of the French law of inheritance; they grow, in little patches—sarazin, millet, rye, wheat, hemp, and potatoes. The little village d'Oo, with its picturesque old castle, is an interesting object.

After passing an open space near the now quiet little river Oo, but which gives evidence of what it can sometimes do, we crossed the bridge d'Astos, or Lasto, to enter the very pretty valley of the same name, and here we had a beautiful view of the Glacier de la Vache, where the stream takes its rise. The peasants are busily occupied with their hay, and as we advanced, we passed through meadows for some distance.

We ascended gradually, but constantly, and at length, leaving beauty and cultivation behind, we approached scenery of a stern character.

At the extremity of the valley, the road has been re-constructed within a fortnight,in consequence of the remonstrance of the guides to the renter of the little inn at the Lac d'Oo: a tax of ten sous is now levied upon every horse, and the guides claimed in return this new road; and, to judge of the old one by some parts we crossed, they have not made a bad bargain. Yet the new part looks and feels as if the first shower of rain would wash the loose stones and earth, of which it has been hastily composed, down into the roaring torrent far below.

The valley is now bare and wild, and at its extremity a zig-zag road leads up the mountain: a further steep ascent of this considerable height, which grows some good fir-trees, leads to the summit of the pass. From it, a descent of ten minutes brought us to the wooden bridge thrown across the stream soon after its exit from the lake, but the lake itself was still invisible. During this descent, the scenery was very wild; by the side of a deep ravine, round projecting rocks, and through a dark wood of firs, the gloomy and mysterious effect of which was greatly heightened by the heavy distant roar of the waterfall, the sight of which we expected to

burst upon us at every turn, but in vain; it was not until we reached the bridge that we saw it on the side of the distant mountain. As yet, no lake had made its appearance, but on ascending the rock which forms its southern boundary, we saw it lying below.

The scene is very peculiar: all around, except at the point where we approached, the bare and stern rock rises, perpendicularly, upwards of a thousand feet above the lake, forming a complete cirque, and apparently inaccessible: the lake lies in the bottom of this bowl; strongly contrasting, by its peaceful appearance, with the stern character of the rocks around it. Immediately before us was the great fall, pouring down a large body of water, with a thundering noise, a perpendicular height of, according to our guide, 950 feet. I counted seven other cascades contributing their supplies to the lake; the extent of which is stated to be thirty-seven hectares, about ninety-two acres; its depth, in the centre, 300 feet; its form, oval.

These cirques terminate many of the higher valleys of the Pyrenees, and are, I believe, quite peculiar to them. The same character is impressed upon them all; and it looks as if, to form

them, the mountains which bound the valley receded at the extremity, and presented a semicircular barrier to further progress. How these cirques have been formed is not an easy question to decide; there is nothing which indicates volcanic action. Whether the softer calcareous rocks have melted away under the influence of water and the elements, leaving more of the harder rocks exposed to view, or whether the yielding of the lower strata has formed these concavities, I know not—this point I leave for geologists to determine—but the result is a very grand and beautiful formation.

Many of them occur in these mountains; that of Gavarnie is, and I believe justly, the most celebrated. That of Heas is remarkable for its vast extent; its grand amphitheatre would afford easy accommodation for millions: this of the Lac d'Oo, is, as we have now experienced, very fine; so is that of the Valley du Lys and many others.

We were fortunate in arriving so early, for the clouds, though collecting, still enabled us to see the lofty summit of the Quarate towering above the fringed outline of the rocks above the lake: our enjoyment, however, was but short-

lived, for the Quarate was soon hid by the increasing mist. Near these heights, by the Glacier de la Vache, is a foot passage to Venasque by the Port d'Oo.

We took some provisions with us, but the old woman who lives at the single cottage near the lake, seemed so anxious to give us some trout and eggs that we ordered a little meal, and down ran the boys to catch the fish in the clear lake, and off went some wild-looking girls for the eggs. In less than a quarter of an hour a table was spread among the rocks, and our appetites were in excellent order to do justice to the old woman's good cheer.

We met several Spanish peasants, with fine banditti countenances and long red caps, some folded and placed flat on their heads, and others hanging down over their shoulders: some of their jackets were embroidered, and the red sash round the waist was of rich silk. They were driving richly-caparisoned mules down the dizzy height.

Though the scenery of the lake was very stern and sombre, yet I think it has a less gloomy aspect than the situation of Luchon. The high walls of rock which rise perpendicularly on each

side of this town give such a bird-in-a-cage sensation that I feel as if I could never get out.

Tuesday, 13.—We intended to have started this morning at six o'clock, if the weather had been fine, for the Porte de Venasque, to set our feet once more on Spanish ground. We looked out anxiously at five, but nothing but mists were visible, so I went to sleep again, as I was much tired from yesterday's long expedition. The weather cleared up a little at eleven, and we walked to a cascade above the opposite village of Montauban.

The curé has made a very pretty walk up to it, through his garden. After the rolling sharp stones which covered the corkscrew road we had yesterday to climb, it was a great relief to find a green path between hedges of lavender and verbina, winding gently upwards through fruit trees and large chesnuts, and sometimes along a straight terrace full of flower-beds, bordered with vines. During our ascent, we rested several times on rustic benches, and luxuriated in the fine view and delicious perfumes, and then suddenly emerged upon a scene of romantic grandeur, worthy of Scott's pen or Salvator Rosa's pencil. The cascade is in the deep

recess of a narrow cleft in the rocks, and the large trees which overhang it, render the effect more dark and imposing.

I should think the sun can never shine on that body of falling water, or penetrate far into the recesses of the sort of open cave where it falls. The body of water is not great, but the sight is certainly very imposing and beautiful: the woman who shews the garden said that the waterfall is always frozen in winter, and the approach so covered with ice that they cannot go near it. The curé has planted, and, indeed, built the garden—for much of it is built up or raised on terraces—entirely at his own expense; and it cost eleven thousand francs. He now bestows upon the poor of the parish whatever gratuity visitors may give for their agreeable promenade.

Wednesday, 14.—This waiting, and hoping, and watching for a clear sky to go to Venasque, recals the disagreeable sensation I have generally experienced when waiting at a sea-port for a fair day to cross in the horrible steamer. Up half a dozen times in the night to see if the clouds were breaking—servants up at half-past five—breakfast ordered—and then comes rain!

I believe we are all more or less slaves to sight-seeing. I long to leave the place, but we have made it a point not to do so till we have seen the lions. This is very foolish; and I am sure a great deal of unnecessary fatigue and trouble is taken in mountainous countries to go over difficult passes &c., when, after all, the high roads are often far more beautiful, and afford the additional enjoyment of a comfortable carriage. From all I can judge, this is the case with the carriage road from Bigorres here.

Evening.—In spite of clouds and showers, we started at nine, on horseback, for the Valley du Lys. We passed close to Castel Bielle, and the road is the same as the one leading to Venasque till the bridge of the Valley du Lys, when we turned to the right, and entered the lovely valley. It was beautiful even in mists and rain, for the large forest trees grow in wild fantastic forms on either side of the rushing river Lys, and clothe the steep sides of the glen, as far as the mists would allow us to see.

Sometimes the valley becomes wider, and the great uneven plain is interspersed with cottages, or rather stables, for there were no inhabitants: they only serve as shelter in the winter for the

cattle. At that season, one man alone lives there for a fortnight at a time: how solitary, and dangerous, too; for we saw in many places the destruction that avalanches had caused—a line cut in the forest from the summit to the bottom—the gigantic beach and oaks actually mown down, and scarcely a trace of them left.

Yet, with all these marks of destruction and desolation, the Valley du Lys is a pleasant and peaceful-looking spot. The three cascades, which are precipitated down the sort of half cirque—a high wall of rocks—at the extremity, are very beautiful; the source of the Lys is in the centre, and this fall is called the Cascade de l'Enfer. At the base of the fall, there still remains an arch of snow, under which the foaming torrent passes, large trees spring from the clefts to ornament the scene; others overhang the high wall of rock down which the water rushes, and beyond are the snow mountains. Alas! the mists veiled their forms, and deprived us of the most striking features of elevated scenery—fine trees, clothed in all their luxuriance of summer foliage, growing close to large fields of ice and snow! We walked over the bridge of snow, though I felt rather nervous on

it, from having heard that part of it had broken away a few days ago. The scenery at that spot is awfully grand, and well accords with its name, Cascade de l'Enfer.

Some boys picked me a bunch of lilies from the rocks, close to the single arch of snow we saw at the bottom of the waterfall: it is their abundance which gives the valley its picturesque name.

This valley belongs to the villages of Castillon, St. Aventin, and Cazon, which we passed through on our way to the Lac d'Oo, and was left to these villages ages ago by an ancient Count d'Arbon,—in the same way that in former times the celebrated St. Bertrand de Comminges granted valleys which belonged to him to various villages—that leading to the Port de Venasque, to Bagnères de Luchon, though in those times Luchon occupied a position on the mountain; the valley where it now stands was a lake, which was afterwards drained by the English, who removed a rock which obstructed the passage of the river.

This M. de St. Bertrand seems quite to have been a kind of Pyrenean St. Patrick, as, beside all the miracles I have related, he had the power of destroying serpents with a wand; and in proof

of this, one is shewn in the church at St. Bertrand—a huge one, which is said to have infested the country in those days; but on our visit we found it was the body of a crocodile, probably brought by some crusader from the East.

We passed several detached "ecuries" (stables), where the cattle, are kept during the winter: higher up the valley, we saw two villages of these establishments, now unoccupied. The timber is very carefully attended to: no trees are cut but under the direction of the proper officer; a sale takes place, and the tenth of the produce goes to the government, to keep up the roads of the district; the rest goes to the benefit of the commune. Timber is dear: we met a load carrying home for our guide, who had purchased twenty-six trees, at thirteen francs each—he to cut and carry home, and pay the government tithe: they were fir-trees for planks, and would stand him at twenty francs a-piece.

In this valley we saw a greater variety of timber, and of finer quality, than we had before met with. The ash, and, I believe, the poplar and sycamore, are valuable, as their leaves, particularly those of the ash, afford excellent spring food for lambs. The young branches are taken

off while the leaves are on, and made into faggots for use, and are far more nutritious than hay.

There is a little wooden chalet at the end of the valley, where a family lives in summer, and provides refreshments for visiters; our *déjeûné* consisted of some very good curds and cream, besides an excellent omelette, which I saw the old woman make while I dried my dress at the kitchen fire.

On our return, the view of Castel Bielle,* on its high, rocky mound, the venerable guardian of three valleys, and the first glimpse down that of Luchon, was very fine. We had heavy rain all the way home, and arrived about three, very wet, and covered with mud.

Our guide's tradition agrees with the legend I related in the last chapter—that in ancient times a lake filled the valley of Luchon, whose waters were kept in by a rock, which was removed by the English; the waters were thus permitted to flow off, and the fine valley was created. We were shewn the spot, on the side of the mountain, to the left of the present town,

* A sketch of it, from the Promenade at Luchon, is given at page 306.

where our guide said the old one formerly stood, overlooking the lake. If such was the case, this scenery just here must have been much more beautiful, for there is a flatness in the valley, which looks formal; the steep sides rise with a uniform abruptness, which would be beautiful if reflected in a clear lake, but, as I said before, there is now something almost awful in their gigantic height and even sides.

Thursday, 15*th*. — Sun-shine this morning, but the higher mountains are covered by clouds, so we wavered about going any expedition, after yesterday's wetting, till all the guides and horses were engaged; out of upwards of sixty guides not one to be found, even so early as seven o'clock. The clouds have descended lower, so we have had no loss, and gained a little time to finish sketches, &c.

Friday evening, 16*th*. — Another rainy day! We have had several days in the south of France such as I never saw even in that most traduced climate, Ireland; days in which the sun never shone.

Sunday, 18*th*.—Still prevented by rain from seeing anything; it poured all yesterday, but, contrary to our expectations, the mountains were

visible, in all their splendour, this morning—in increased splendour too, for a great deal of snow has fallen since they were last visible, five days ago, so that now they look like a new and finer range.

Our intention is, when the weather permits, to enter Spain by the Port de Venasque, to proceed to Viella in Catalonia, and from thence descend the Valley of Aran to St. Beat, there to meet our courier and the carriage.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Excursion into Spain—Splendid forest scenery—Hospice de Venasque — Spanish honesty, and veneration for the mountain pass — La Maledetta — Pierre Barran — Sad effects of parting in anger.

July 19*th.*—We were up at five o'clock, and had the happiness to see the mountains perfectly distinct, and a brilliant morning; departure for Spain, of course, resolved on. I in a chaise à porteur, carried by two men, with two to relieve, for which we are to pay forty francs: the rest of the party mounted, and our guide, Benoit, carries on his horse a portmanteau, and various other things—provisions for the men, and a leathern wine bottle, to be used à l'Espagnolle—that is, to be held a certain distance from the mouth, and the stream of wine directed into

the mouth, thus really "making the throat a thoroughfare for wine."

The ride up the valley was delightful; woods, and mountains, known before under the gloomy influence of mist and rain, now appeared in all their beauty. We passed the Tour de Castel Bielle, standing out in its fine position, and I found that the "porteurs" kept up to the usual mountain pace, for in less than an hour we reached the point where the road to the Vallée de Lys branches off, and we entered the Vallée of the Hospice — a valuable property of the Commune of Luchon.

We soon reached the Cagot's hut; the Cagots seem to have ceased to be considered as a separate race—the only present distinction being their own inclination to remain in the mountains. The family occupying this hut lost a remarkably fine young man, who was killed at Constantine, and their remaining son has now been drawn in the conscription; I saw the wife loading a horse with wood, to sell at Luchon.

We continued to ascend, enjoying a good view, of which the Pic de Pecade, not visible from Luchon, formed the great attraction: it is a complete sugar loaf of smooth shist, and looks

almost as if it had been chiseled. We now reached the forest of Charagan, growing very fine beech and fir, with other trees, and I saw a large cherry lately cut, which is a wood much esteemed for building.

Soon after leaving the forest, we reached the Hospice, having, by degrees, neared the great heights to which, for many days, we had looked forward with so much anxiety; behind us we saw the fine pasture height of Sobra-Bagnières, and could judge that the view from it must be very good, commanding all the heights; a visit to it might be combined with the expedition to the Valley du Lys. (Mem. for future travellers.)

The Hospice is a large, substantial house, for which a considerable rent is paid; the tenant is obliged to keep the road to the Port from the Hospice in order, as it is called; and in winter, when he descends into the valley, must leave bread, wine, and firing in the house for the relief of any traveller who may call. It is a point of conscience, which is almost invariably observed, to leave money equivalent to the quantity of provisions consumed.

Another trait of honesty connected with this

passage is the sacredness of property left at the Port de Venasque. By law, the carriers do not cross the frontier; the bales of goods are deposited at the Port, and there they often remain for the day and night, before being removed by the parties to whom they belong, and yet the plunder of a bale is a thing never heard of. And whence is this? Is it that scenes like these, that the sight of nature in its sublimity, the awful terrors of the avalanche and storm in these high regions have the power of elevating the mind, and rendering it incapable of base and sordid actions?

A strong religious feeling, too, is connected with the pass: it has all been consecrated, so that the bodies of those lost in the passage may lie in holy ground. I was pointed out a spot, at the side of one of the small lakes, where lie the bodies of five men, who were carried away by an avalanche of snow, in attempting a passage during the winter. It was two months before they were discovered.

Our cortège stopped at the Hospice a few minutes: we walked forwards, about to penetrate amongst the great heights around us, and with a feeling of curiosity as to how we were to

get on—a feeling destined to be far more strongly excited. We had, from a height reached in a few minutes, to halloo loudly before we could move the main body, still lingering at the Hospice below us.

And now our hard work began. We ascended by the side of a torrent, the young Pique, I fancy, forcing its passage through a bed of snow. The men took me in my chair over the snow-bridges, being, I conclude, a more practicable mode than passing through the torrent; but this proceeding much increased my alarm, for I could not help thinking how easily the fragile bridge might be carried into the valley below. We knew that part of the snow-bridge over the cascade in the Valley du Lys had been carried away the very night before we were there. We thus corkscrewed our way along, wondering by what miracle we were to get out; for never did I see a passage, where the effect of enclosure is so complete; even to the last quarter of an hour, the perpendicular wall of rock seems to bar all further progress.

We continued our ascent, and reached a spot which, to my surprise, was only half way: I did not see how more than another hour could be

required to reach the summit which appeared to be so close.

The Pic de Sobragarde, the highest point to the right of the port, was now finely before us. "It is not," said our guide, "very difficult of access, and the view from it is very fine; the top, when clear of snow, is covered with turf." The Montaignette lies in front of the pass, and amidst the snow which lay below the point around us, are four or five small lakes, all now unfrozen, except one. The water over the snow at their edges, of a beautiful blue colour.

We now had a proof of the intelligence of our horses in getting round a projection in the path, a short, but nervous pass, covered with snow. After fording a torrent with some difficulty, we came to so narrow and steep a passage in the snow, that it was thought better to dismount: even on foot it was a formidable business— a false step would have carried one to a great depth, probably to the frozen lake, far, far below.

Nothing could exceed the desolation of the scene; all appearance of vegetation gone — splintered rocks around us — and, below, the dreary little lakes partly frozen, and fringed with

snow. We reached the rock called "l'Homme," which serves in winter to mark the direction of the Hospice. It appeared at an immense depth below us, yet, in winter, the guides glide from this to the bottom, over the snow, with great velocity, and in an incredibly short space of time; they direct and steady themselves with a pole, but it requires much skill to do so; for once started, there is no stopping, and any blundering would be fatal.

We toiled on, the chairmen and horses astonishing us by their power and steadiness. At last, when all further advance seemed impracticable, we rounded a projection, and, between its giant portals, saw the "Port" above us. The view here is too terrific to be picturesque; but it is truly sublime: we looked back upon the track we had passed, and could scarcely comprehend how the journey had been accomplished. At a quarter to eleven, we reached the Port de Venasque. Then, after all this upward toiling, we did not even attain a platform. No, the ridge passage through the narrow "Port" is not above a few feet level! And there we looked down—down both ways—there was no help for it—no end to the apparent danger. Nothing would have in-

duced me to return the way we came, and yet, on looking down the Spanish side, it appeared quite as bad. I could see nothing to prevent our slipping straight down into the deep ravine which separates the Port de Venasque from the most awful of savage mountains—the snow-clad, accursed, unclimbed, almost unlooked-upon Maledetta.

It is the highest of the Pyrenees—the highest mountain in Spain or France; and yet it does not shew its giant head in, I believe, any of the distant views one gets of the Pyrenees. But there it was. We entered the Port, and though far distant, it suddenly appeared close before us. "Port" is the term used for all the numerous passes in the mountains between France and Spain: they are, many of them, curious cuts in the gigantic wall of rock which separates the two countries, and at the Port de Venasque, so narrow is the opening, that a good pair of gates might serve as a barrier.

The Brêchede Roland is another of these; and so exactly do they appear to have been cut, that I do not wonder the imaginative peasantry of these regions should have attributed that near Gavarnie to the sword of their great hero Ro-

land. As we stood in the Port de Venasque, I thought with pleasure on Ariosto's beautiful descriptions of Roland and the Paladins of ancient days. Indeed, it would appear as if he had the very spot, and scenery through which we had passed, in his mind, when he relates the wanderings of Bradamante in search of the enchanter's castle :—

> " Prese la via per una stretta valle
> Con Brunello ora innanzi, ora alle spalle.
> Di monte in monte, e d'uno in altro bosco
> Giunsero, ove l'altezza di Pirene
> Pûo dimostrar, se non è l'aer fosco,
> E Francia, e Spagna, e due diverse arene."

The passage is about ten or twelve feet wide, between two rocks, which rise apparently about forty or fifty feet above it ; the level is only a few feet ; we passed it, and were in Aragon. Here were lying some bales of wool, left by Spanish carriers, to be conveyed to Luchon. We arrived only just in time, for, fine as the day was on the French side, the Maledetta was collecting clouds around it ; we were so high that this Queen of the Pyrenees did not look to the advantage which she ought ; but still a fine object, and the view over her desolate territory is

very impressive. The Maledetta, owing to fissures in the ice, is more dangerous of access, than difficult. We saw, round the summit, what appeared to be a road; it is a chasm in the glacier; this chasm, according to Benoit, our guide, is sixteen pans (10⅔ feet) wide, (a pan is eight inches.)

"Poor Pierre Barran!" said our guide, as he saw me looking at those fearful clefts in the glaciers of the Maledetta; "I never see that spot without thinking of our good Pierre, who was the bravest and best guide in all the Hautes Pyrénées. It is now full twenty years ago, yet it seems only like yesterday. And his unfortunate son! I shall never forget the poor young man's sorrow. God grant none of us may see the like again!"

"What was it? What happened to him?" we inquired.

"Ah, it's a sad story!" said our guide; "and we had better get safe over all this snow, and down yonder scala, and reach the other side of the frozen lake, before we talk of anything so dreadful; for I would not answer for my own footsteps, much less for the ladies', if I was thinking of Pierre Barran."

We went on; and the way, indeed, soon became so difficult as to require all our attention. After descending the scala, and over, or rather through, an awful waterfall, we sat down under shade of some fine chesnut trees. It was now so hot that our thoughts reverted with great pleasure to the frozen regions through which we had passed, and I reminded our guide of his promise.

"Pierre Barran," said he, "was the bravest and most honest man I ever knew; indeed, there was never one like him, except his son—his only son, Charles; and when any strangers wanted to go up to the Port in bad weather, or when there was great danger of avalanches, Pierre Barran was sure to be employed.

"The father and son loved each other more than any two mortals I ever saw; yet both were passionate, and I have seen them quarrel violently. Charles sometimes accused his father of being fool-hardy, and said he was sure that, sooner or later, he would come to some untimely end. Late in the autumn of 1812, two gentlemen, engineers, came to Luchon, and inquired for a guide to the Maledetta. All the passes were covered with deep snow, and every one of us laughed at the idea of any man thinking

of going even over the Port de Venasque, much less up the Maledetta, at such a time of the year.

"However, Pierre Barran did not laugh; but when it was proposed to him, he gravely said he would go. Whereupon his son flew into a great passion, and said he might as well commit suicide at once; and he swore a solemn oath, that nothing should tempt him up—no, not even as far as the Hospice.

"Barran was very unhappy at his son's anger; but still he had pledged his word to go with the gentlemen, and would not retract. It was the custom of both father and son to go and pray together every evening at the cross near Montauban church, but on the night before this dangerous expedition, neither of them were seen there. The next morning at five o'clock, a neighbour who lived in the adjoining cottage overheard Barran saying to his son—'Do not let us part in anger, my dear boy, for perhaps we may never meet again!'

"'If you think so, then, father, why do you go? For my part, it seems downright madness.'

"At that Pierre got angry again, and went out without even wishing his son good-bye.

" The day had hardly dawned when Charles was seen walking up and down before the cottage, in great agitation. ' Oh, that I had not sworn that fearful oath!' he said. ' My poor father, I know he will perish, and I shall not be near to save him. Cursed be my folly!' He was aware of his wickedness in having been so violent, and yet went on swearing still, and saying, ' And to think that I had not even his blessing!'

" All day Charles Barran was like one wild; and when night came on, the gentlemen returned, but poor Barran was not with them. Everything had gone on well till they came to the lowest glacier you saw in the Maledetta. Though he had succeeded in getting the travellers across, by some unaccountable accident his foot slipped and he fell in. The gentlemen could hear his groans for a long time, but they had no means of rendering him any assistance; all they could do was to hasten back, and inform us of the sad event.

" The moment Charles heard of it, he threw himself on the ground in despair. The neighbours tried all they could to pacify him; and one said, perhaps, after all, his father might not be dead, and offered to go with him as soon as morning dawned, and see if they could find him.

"The moment Charles heard this, he started up, and exclaimed, 'I will give all I possess to any two who will go with me this very minute to the Maledetta!' But none were found to venture.

"The impetuous young man would not wait; so he went alone, and none of us ever expected to see him again alive. However, next morning we went up to the Port, taking with us ropes, and irons, and everything necessary to restore animation, in case they had not perished. It was a rough morning—more snow had fallen—and none of us expected to return safe. However, the Barrans were both so much beloved that no one murmured, and we were all resigned to risk our lives for their sakes. It was past twelve when we reached the Port de Venasque, and we all looked with the greatest anxiety towards the Fente.

"Fortunately the weather became a little clearer, yet I could see nothing at that distance; but Jean fancied something black moved near the crevice, so we hurried on. Two hours more passed before we could reach it, for the snow began to fall again right in our faces. Joseph fancied he heard a faint cry, as we approached the fatal spot.

" 'They are both dead!' exclaimed Joseph. 'But I am sure I heard a cry as if from the glacier.'

" We hallooed as loud as ever we could, and a faint voice, that sounded like a distant echo of our own, was heard; so, on approaching we saw Charles standing on a ledge of ice in the chasm below. We immediately let down to him some rope and a bottle of spirits.

" 'Let them down further,' said he; 'I will go down for my father's body, if it is at the very bottom of the mountain!'

" So Charles fastened the ropes round his body, and we let him down full twenty feet. He had tried to climb down, but could only get part of the way; and, as we had promised to come, he resolved to wait. And so he had passed all the night half-way down that terrible place, clinging to a projecting bit of ice, not to save his own life, but that he might be alive in the morning when we came, to fetch up his father's body.

" 'All night long,' he afterwards said, 'I prayed to God that he would enable me to live till I saw my dear father's body buried in our own church, and he has heard my prayer. Oh, if we had both not been blinded with anger on

that fatal night till we forgot to pray! 'Twas the only time in our lives we did not ask God's blessing on our undertakings, and we have been fearfully punished.'

"Well, we let down the ropes, but it was long before Charles found the body, for poor Pierre had fallen in some way further along the cleft; and then Charles was so benumbed and exhausted he could not lift it for some time. Joseph offered to go down and help him, but Charles begged him not, as he was determined no one should risk the danger but himself. At last, he succeeded in fastening the rope round his poor father, and we drew them both up.

"'Thank God!' said he, as they reached the light of day—'His name be praised! my dear, dear father has a smile upon his countenance!'

"And so it was indeed, he had never looked so peaceful before. Poor Charles fell into a faint, and it took some time to recover him; but at last we succeeded, and got as far as the Hospice that night.

"The next morning Charles was hardly alive, but implored us to hurry forwards. 'If I can only live to see him interred in our church I shall die content!'

"God heard his prayer. We all reached Montauban by four o'clock that evening; and the good curé and the greater part of the villagers met us, and the mournful ceremony was performed.

"But Charles Barran never spoke again; as soon as the body was placed in the earth, he fell down senseless on the spot, and two days afterwards was buried in the same grave.

"And ever since, when any dear friends quarrel, or any of us are going to part in anger, we always remember poor Pierre Barran and his unfortunate son."

I will now return to our expedition by the Port de Venasque, from which I made this long digression, and thus anticipated our arrival in southern regions, after the toils of snow-paths, and all the difficulties of our route. As we looked from the "Port" towards the noble chain of mountains before us, Benoit told us that the highest point is the Maledetta; the next, the Pic de Natou, lying more to the south; on the right, the Pic de Perigeo; and at the extremity, the Pic de Paderme. On the left is the Forca-

nada, and then the fine Pic de Pomero, little inferior to the Maledetta, and which afterwards, as we descended the Vallée d'Artiga de Lin, was so fine an object.

We descended on the Spanish side, which, though steep, is much less formidable, and arrived at our resting-place, where the men and horses were to feed, at three-quarters after eleven. Here we thought our troubles ended; but we were mistaken. Below us lay a wild valley, on the left of the Maledetta; but it was not our road —it leads to the town of Venasque. At twenty minutes after twelve we again started, and, after occasional ascents and descents, found ourselves mounting to reach a bed of snow above us, over which, some time before, we had seen some Spanish mules toiling, though we little thought then we should have to follow their example; but so it was. We had to pass the Pecade, which separates Aragon from Catalonia. At the commencement of the valley below us we saw the cascade, which loses itself in the Trou de Taureau, or Toron, and which, after having passed under a part of the range, re-appears, as it is said, in the wood of the Pomero, at what is called the source of the Garonne. Our guide told us the connexion has been verified by means of

saw-dust thrown in at the fall.* To descend to the cascade and return, would have occupied two additional hours ; with six hours still before us we were obliged to give it up.

We continued to ascend, and found ourselves at last higher than the Port de Venasque ; we passed, on our left, the path which leads to the Port de Pecade, and which would have been our way had we returned to Luchon ; the view of the Maledetta, which we had hitherto enjoyed, was now shut out by a projection of the ridge, and we saw her no more ; but a new view opened upon us—that of the summits of the eastern Pyrenees ; a vast number of pyramidal points, all partially streaked with snow, and one of much greater elevation than the rest; it is curious, from the number of heights, and the similarity of their shape.

We passed a circular pile of stones—the division between the two provinces of Aragon and Catalonia. We now entered Catalonia, and reached the ruins of some huts, where troops were stationed during the war.

* This is the spot into which the evil spirit is said to have thrown the Lady of Fronsac, as I related in the legend at page 312.

CHAPTER XIX.

Passage of the Gorge de Pomero—Desolate scenery—Beautiful flowers in the Spanish valley of Artiga de Lin—Tale of Catarina de Comminges and Alphonso, King of Aragon.

And now we commenced a very steep descent over snow, through "La Gorge de Pomero;" it looked an awful plunge. For a considerable distance we scrambled over the rocks at the side of the snow, but often they were so steep that we were obliged to walk through it, and in some places we sank in up to our knees; yet this, though very disagreeable, was much safer than the harder snow-paths we had sometimes to pursue — those winding and steep scalas, only a few feet wide, with a deep abyss yawning below on one side, a wall of rock on the other.

The desolate grandeur of this scene was to me most depressing; no signs of vegetation could

be anywhere perceived, and soon a dreary mist came slowly winding upwards from the valley, and veiled all distant objects from our eyes. As we toiled through the tedious beds of snow or bare chaos of rocks, I experienced a sort of hopeless feeling, and despaired of ever again seeing a blade of grass, or any sign of animated life, and almost fancied that we had passed into another planet.

When at last we came to a few patches of stunted vegetation, I hailed the sight with surprise and with more delight than I ever felt at entering the finest garden in the world. So powerfully does a very new and striking scene sometimes impress our minds that we seem absorbed by its present influence, and the past fades for the time from our recollection ; we fancy everything else except the striking scene before us was only a dream, and cannot even imagine any other future—at least, I find it so, though I do not indeed often meet with any impression sufficiently powerful to produce the feeling. Our descent from the Port de Pecade put me again in mind of Bradamante's search for the Enchanter's Castle,—

> " Quindi per aspro e faticoso calle
> Si discendea nella profonda valle."

There was, too, at the bottom of the upper ravine, a rocky height so steep and isolated as quite to agree with Ariosto's account of the Enchanter's Palace :—

> " Vi sorge in mezzo un sasso, che la cima
> D'un bel muro d'acciar tutta si fascia ;
> E quella tanto verso il ciel sublima,
> Che, quanto ha intorno, inferior si lascia.
> Non faccia, chi non vola, andarvi stima ;
> Che spesa indarno vi saria ogni ambascia.
> Brunel disse : Ecco dove prigionieri
> Il mago tien le donne e i cavalieri.
> Da quattro canti era tagliato, e tale,
> Che parea dritto al fil della sinopia ;
> Da nessun lato nè sentier, ne scale
> V'eran, che di salir facesser copia :
> E bene appar, che d'animal ch' abbia ale,
> Sia questa stanza, nido e tana propria."
>
> Canto iv., p. 20.

After a long and most fatiguing descent, but very fine and wild, with the Pomero towering above our heads, we left the snow, the mists cleared away, and we rejoiced to find ourselves amid the milder beauties of vegetation. A variety of lovely wild flowers welcomed us back to the world below, and we approached a wood of fine beeches and chesnuts.

Before we entered its umbrageous depths,

however, we had to pass through a deep and rapid torrent, just above a large waterfall, on each side of which the scattered and riven trunks of trees bore evidence of its fury. I felt sure that the horses and men would never be able to stem this fearful torrent. The guide went first, on horseback, and reached the other side in safety, and we all followed; but the men who carried my chaise à porteur and me, were above their knees in the rapid current, and declared that it was indeed a "*mauvais pas.*"

After this (to me) terrific passage, we came into a scene of exquisite sylvan loveliness: it was a sudden and delicious transition from the barren, piercing cold of polar regions, to all the glowing and luxuriant vegetation of the south. Wild flowers grew under the wide spreading branches of gigantic oaks and chesnuts, in such profusion and variety, that it seemed as if all the conservatories of England had emptied their rich stores in this chosen spot.

I do not know the names of many flowers, but I never before saw any so beautiful, and their vivid and rare hues were only equalled by the gorgeous wings of innumerable butterflies which sported among them. Some of these lovely

creatures hovered close around us, and one, whose wings must have been full six inches long, rested for a moment on my dress. I hope it was of that kind which, I hear, is called the Angel, for it is supposed to be a good spirit, and that it brings happiness to the fortunate mortal it approaches.

For nearly half an hour we proceeded through these woodland conservatories, where the fluttering "angels" made me almost imagine that the spirit of harmony which seems to pervade this happy valley had brought together the most beautiful parts of the flowers to form a butterfly, or rather, as if the half-breathing flowers had in the very glee of their existence escaped from their green stems, rejoiced themselves into life, and risen up to pay a livelier adoration to the sun's vivid rays.

Since I heard the wild Legend of Chambord Forest,* in which spirits once innocent and lovely are said to be imprisoned in flowers, I have looked on my favourite plants with more interest than ever. I am, too, more delighted with their perfume, because that strange Spirit of the Violet said the only intellectual pleasure they felt was

* This tale I did not insert, for want of room.

when mortals were enjoying their perfume. I delight, too, in thinking that we are surrounded by spirits, and there is nothing the coldest reason can urge against the pleasant idea that flowers and trees, and all the lovely works of creation, which minister so much to our daily happiness, may be the dwelling-places of good spirits. The thought makes everything more companionable—to imagine those beings look upon us with kindness, and breathe peace and delight into our hearts with every gentle air that wafts their perfume towards us! How well Mrs. Norton expresses this idea in the following beautiful lines :—

" Go! let the scoffer call it
A shadow and a dream;
Those meek subservient spirits
Are nearer than we deem:
Think not they visit only
The bright enraptured eye
Of some pure, sainted martyr
Prepared and glad to die;
Or that the poet's fancy,
Or painter's colour'd skill,
Creates a dream of beauty,
And moulds a world at will:
They live! they wander round us,
Soft resting on the cloud;
Although to human vision
The sight be disallow'd;

They are to the Almighty
What the rays are to the sun—
An emanating essence
From the great supernal One:
They bend for prayer to listen,
They weep to witness crimes;
They watch for holy moments—
Good thoughts—repentant times:
They cheer the meek and humble,
They heal the broken heart;
They teach the wavering spirit
From earthly ties to part;
Unseen they dwell among us,
As when they watch'd below,
In spiritual anguish,
The sepulchre of Woe:
And when we pray, though feeble
Our orisons may be,
They then are our companions
Who pray eternally."

We were now continually in a forest. By a rough and very steep road we again reached the stream, which we passed on some trees thrown across it.

Here Benoit and W—— left the party, to see what is called, (but why, I know not,) "La source de la Garonne." The spring which gives rise to the river (the Garonne), which flows by Viella, is surely more deserving of the name. W—— said he passed a torrent, which he would have

had great difficulty in accomplishing by himself, and had a scramble of about ten minutes through the forest to reach the spot where the stream, of considerable volume, issues from among the rocks, and is certainly worthy of being a great river's source. Unfortunately, the rocks are so numerous immediately at the issue, that they divide the water, and injure the effect. On the return, Benoit made the capture of an enormous frog, which he rejoiced in, as being very fat, and excellent eating.

Again we started, and kept descending through the forest—a source of great wealth; the road now improved, and we at length emerged from the wood, and, after a rapid march of three hours, reached the hermitage of Artiga de Lin, the first habitation we had seen. Here refreshments may be had. There is a small chapel near it, where a priest attends on festivals. Our bargain with the porters extended no further; but as we had three more hours to travel, and some rough ground still before us, I dreaded the fatigue of riding; so we made a further agreement to pay twenty francs for the chair to Viella.

At the Hospice a number of Spanish peasants, genuine Catalonians, came out to see us, and

accompanied us into the dark and solemn chapel. The contrast between the French and Spaniards is more decided than that of any two other nations I ever saw, and is much more striking here than it was in our journey from Bayonne to St. Sebastian, for all the inhabitants of the Basque provinces, on whichever side of the frontier, are the same people, and quite unlike the French.

Here, in Catalonia, the Spanish women have a most sedate, and quite a regal air. You may fancy them born to be arch-duchesses. Their countenances are expressive of sound judgment and good sense, and totally devoid of that frivolity which may be often seen in the French peasantry. They appear, too, far less amiable and desirous of pleasing, but to possess more solid goodness. They are very handsome, and have peculiarly fine lips and eyes, with clear and rather fair complexions, and the most beautiful colour in their cheeks, exactly where it ought to be.

After the horses had fed, we again, about four o'clock, got under weigh. At first, the road was delightful, passing through meadows, surrounded by wooded heights, which were now, however, beginning to be clothed in mist. We descended rapidly, and reached some stables, the winter re-

fuge of the cattle, but now deserted. We again crossed the branch of the Garonne, but now in a gentlemanlike way, by a bridge, and again ascended for some time in the forest of Balican, occasionally having the river some hundreds of feet immediately below us, until we reached a projecting eminence, from which we had a charming view of the Valley of Aran.

The first Spanish town we saw was Villa Hermosa, so called from the beauty of its situation, as well as the splendid buildings it once contained. And, indeed, though the ancient palaces have long since fallen to decay, it still deserves the name of Hermosa, from the extreme beauty of its position, being built on one of the loftiest of those rocky heights which characterize the Valley of Aran, and seemed formed expressly as resting-places, from which to admire the lovely scenes below.

Villa Hermosa, now Villamos, is the most elevated town in the Vale of Aran, and being situated just where the valley makes a curve, it commands two different views.* AsI was borne

* I afterwards made a sketch of Villamos, and the village under it, called Bebos, with the town of Castel Leon, on the opposite side of the valley. It forms the frontispiece to the second volume of this work.

luxuriously along the woody slope, and gazed on these romantic scenes, I thought of the beautiful Catarina, heiress of the Comte of Comminges, by whose marriage with the King of Aragon this valley became a portion of Spain.

In the year 1198, Comte Bernard of Comminges, accompanied by his only daughter, passed through this valley, and was nobly entertained by the principal inhabitants of Villa Hermosa.

The young heiress was betrothed to Alphonso, King of Aragon, who was one of the most accomplished and handsome princes of the age — at least, rumour described him as such; but the beautiful Catarina had never seen him, and therefore, as she journeyed towards his court, a thousand fears and apprehensions caused her to tremble, and she gladly seized an opportunity to delay the journey. Her father was obliged to use the utmost persuasion to urge her forward; yet he was by no means a harsh parent, and, unlike most fathers of those times, he had himself superintended her education, and always treated her as a friend and companion; and now he endeavoured, by every tender endearment, to cheer and support her drooping spirits.

"My darling, noble child," said he, as they

stood on the balcony of the castle at Villa Hermosa, while a bright moon illumined the scene below—"You have, I well know, sacrificed the dearest wishes of your heart for the good of your country; it has been, certainly, a great trial, but God will reward your unselfish conduct."

"I want no other reward than your approbation," replied his daughter; "that look of deep affection quite compensates for what I have suffered. After all, too, what a foolish fancy mine was!" she continued, blushing deeply; "but indeed I knew not that stranger-minstrel had made such a deep impression on my heart till you announced the King of Aragon's proposals; then, indeed, I felt——but I will never think of him more," she added, with a sigh.

"Dearest child, I well knew your feelings: I was aware that such noble sentiments as breathed in the poetry sung by that Spanish minstrel were well calculated to fascinate the pure taste of my darling girl, and had I been blessed with a son, or were France more kindly affected towards my people, I would never have demanded the sacrifice of your affections, but allowed you to dream in peace of the gentle poet, even though my fears had been confirmed, that his rank in life

was far too humble ever to aspire to my child."

"Nor would he ever, I am certain," said she; "for, if you recollect his song, it only spoke of hopeless love, of the ennobling effect of deep affection when there was no prospect of its ever being returned."

"I well remember it, my child, but indeed we must both try to forget the handsome minstrel. You have declared that the consciousness of acting for the good of our dear vassals has been sufficient reward, and this conviction must support you, even should the King, your husband, not prove so worthy or agreeable as fame declares him to be. And now go to rest, darling, for we have promised to honour the good Abbot of Mitz-Aran by breakfasting in his old monastery, and after that, our journey is long."

"And at the end of the day we shall then reach St. Liestra, the place where the King has appointed to meet us," thought Caterina, as she retired to rest.

Poor Caterina tried hard to occupy her thoughts with her royal bridegroom, yet tradition says, that in her dreams that night she saw the nameless minstrel who had appeared, a

year before, at her father's court at Comminges ; and the next morning it was with a heavy heart that she pursued her way.

That night they reached St. Liestra, but the King was not there : he sent, indeed, a numerous retinue and a splendid litter to convey her to Saragossa. It was a great relief to Caterina ; and as she retired to her room, she rejoiced to think that sleep might once more give her the bliss of such dreams as had visited her pillow the night before, without a crime.

Perhaps it was this thought that inspired them, but certainly on that night the unknown minstrel appeared to her again, and his songs were more beautiful, and his appearance more fascinating, than ever.

The next morning, the Count begged her to hasten as much as possible, as they were expected at Saragossa at noon.

Caterina obeyed with a heavy heart, and, attired in her most costly robes, entered the royal litter ; but it was near evening when they reached the splendid palace of Aragon, and Caterina became so agitated, she could scarcely see anything.

But what is this ?—a well-known voice greets

her ear. Can it be that of the minstrel? Yes; he stands by her side, attired in his simple blue velvet mantle.

"A thousand welcomes, fairest Princess," he says—"in the King's name, I bid thee welcome, and have his orders to conduct thee to his presence."

Caterina trembled more than ever; for it was very strange the king should have chosen a person of his low rank to greet her, and it seemed cruel in the minstrel thus to intrude. And now he takes her hand, and presses it to his lips. She was almost disposed to be angry, and she scarcely dared to look at him; and yet she could not help wishing that fate had given her such a husband.

"Come, fairest of mortals, the banquet waits, and the nobles are impatient to do homage to their beautiful Queen."

They enter the gorgeous chamber, and the minstrel conducts her to a splendid throne. There he casts off his simple attire, and stands before the astonished Caterina arrayed in royal splendour. Shouts of "Long live our gracious King Alphonso, and his lovely Queen!" echo through the lofty halls. It was the King

himself, who, disguised as a simple minstrel, had won the heart of his bride.

"Pardon me!" he exclaimed, "adored Princess, for deceiving you."

"Nay, it was my doing," interrupted the Count of Comminges: "I wished to try if my daughter was worthy of the devoted affection of such a prince, and whether she would sacrifice her own inclinations to the good of her people. I am now satisfied. The dearest wish of my heart is accomplished; and may God shower down his choicest blessings on your heads."

The marriage ceremony was performed, and Alphonso and Caterina reigned long and happily over the united states of Aragon and Comminges.

CHAPTER XX.

Entrance into the Valley of Aran—Numerous villages—Aubert—Moncorban—Catalonian peasants—Arrival at Viella—Miserable quarters.

As we proceeded further, the density of the population in this beautiful valley of Aran was very striking. From the point where we rested for a few minutes, six well-built villages, with their churches, were in sight. Castel Leon in the bottom of the valley; Aros immediately before us; Villa Hermosa higher up the mountain; Aubert on the right. We had now a very agreeable ride towards Viella, looking over the rich valley, with the Garonne rushing on below us. We laughed at the rough descent to the river, though, without the experience of the morning, it might have alarmed us, for the path was none of the widest, with a very respectable precipice

on the left, and the river far below. We thus reached the high road of the valley, and cantered triumphantly into Aubert.

One of our horses had lost a shoe en route, and had long shewn evident symptoms of his loss. It was here replaced by a smith, a fine specimen of a Catalonian peasant—tall, slight, but muscular, long limbed, and as erect as an arrow; he wore a brown jacket, with culottes of the same colour, open at the knees; his well-shaped leg was covered with a blue stocking, kept up by a coloured garter, and the espartillos, the mountain slipper of cord, the ancient cothurnus, was bound with a lace round the ancle; on his head was the red cloth cap, with the long pendant end,—sometimes this end is folded on the top of the head, with good effect, like the capulets of the Basque women.

Our appearance brought out the population, and among the spectators, I saw many faces, shewing that this place deserves the reputation which the valley has for beauty. At Aubert, we crossed the Garonne, and saw about its rocks, and along its banks, numerous "rouleaux" of timber, left by the last flood, to be forwarded by the next.

The timber of this valley is much esteemed, and gives rise to a considerable trade. The river is the mode of conveyance: each log, with its peculiar mark, is thrown into the stream, and finds itself, at last, at St. Beat. It is a high misdemeanour to take a log, and is punished with "dix ans de galère;" so that property to a great amount is thus scattered along the river in perfect safety. Every step we took disclosed some new beauty, and I longed to stop and sketch, every minute; but it was getting late, and the men shook their heads ominously whenever I asked to stop. Fortunately, however, just before we came to the beautiful village of Moncorban, my porteurs waited for a minute or two to take breath, and I then hastily made this sketch, and afterwards put in our own party as they were grouped at the moment.

Before reaching Viella, we passed what had been a convent of considerable size, called Mitzaran, from its position half-way up the valley. It shews traces of high antiquity, and of Moorish architecture; the church still remains, but many of the buildings have been pulled down, and what is standing has been converted into a farm-house.

Sketched by Lady Chatterton and drawn on stone by Bichebois.

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THE VILLAGE OF MONTCORBAN

in the valley of aran. Spain

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It was nearly dark before we reached Viella, and the shades of evening gave a still more desolate appearance to the blackened ruins of houses which had been burnt in the late war. Every object assumed a gloomy appearance, and I could not help thinking of the horrors which had so recently occurred in this spot.

There is something peculiarly dreadful in the idea of a civil war—of brothers fighting against each other, and sons entering into conflict with their once-loved parents. In England, the recollections of internal wars are in some measure hallowed by time, and we look with interest on the old castles, though their blackened ruins still shew that they owe their destruction to civil conflict; but here, where fires of civil discord and hatred seem still to smoulder—where we see no town or village that does not bear traces of recent war, I could not help shuddering as we entered the blackened gateway of Viella, and saw a multitude of ferocious and banditti-looking figures crowd around us; nor could I repress a fear that hands which had been so lately died in the blood of their own kindred, might be lifted against us for the sake of gain.

These disagreeable fears were not diminished

by the spectral look of burnt houses and the ruined bridge over which we crossed, or the aspect of the Alcalde's dwelling, where we were destined to pass the night, or the clamour and sensation caused by our arrival there.

Viella is the chief place of the valley; and some way up the mountain is a kind of fort, where the Governor resides. We caused quite a sensation, and made our entrée amidst the barking of dogs, and the anxious faces of young and old, who turned out to see us: Benoit led the way, followed by those on horseback, and I, the great object of wonderment, borne in my chair and surrounded by a crowd of children, closed the procession; such an apparition having, perhaps, never shewn itself before.

We went to the Alcalde's. The exterior of the house did not promise much, so, when we got inside, we could not say we were disappointed; nothing could well be more wretched and dirty. However, there was no remedy, so we had to make the best of it: indeed, the streets through which we passed looked as if the plague was in them, and the Alcalde's house as if many a foul murder had been committed within its walls. The old and half-

ruined staircase groaned under our weary footsteps; and the large, lofty room, with its dark rafters and walls, to my apprehensive sight, seemed stained with blood. The five doors, opening from it on mysterious galleries and rooms of all sizes, and none of which would fasten, or scarcely shut; the large dark bed within a deep recess, and, above all, the ominously serious look with which the Alcalde pointed to it, and hoped we should sleep well in his state bed; the solemn countenances, too, of the Spanish women, who stood in silent stillness around, their dark faces shaded by the white mantilla, and their majestic figures attired in black; all this had such a new, and, to my tired imagination, fearful air, that it put me most disagreeably in mind of a tragedy I saw when a child, representing murder committed in a forest inn. Some delay occurred before we could procure a fire in this gloomy apartment, every one appearing to be absorbed in the surprise of our arrival and the earnest contemplation of our interesting selves. At last, after many intreaties, a royal-looking donna slowly approached the gigantic hearth with some sticks and a candle, and we had the pleasure of seeing

them soon in a blaze, and of drying our feet and clothes, which were still very wet from our knee-deep wading through the snow.

We imagined ourselves extremely hungry; but when, after the lapse of two weary hours, some black-looking dishes were brought, we could not find anything eatable. The bread was mouldy; the soup—I know not of what compound of horrors it was made—but, after the first mouthful, we hastily abandoned it. We asked for milk—there was none; for eggs—"no hay," (not any.) I then turned all my attention to the prospect of repose; but in this we seemed destined to be disappointed, for we were surrounded by a large concourse of people, who paid very little regard to our repeated wishes to be left alone.

In vain I urged extreme fatigue—having arisen at four o'clock in the morning, and had a most tiring expedition over the mountains. They pointed to the bed, and advised me by all means to go to sleep, but did not appear at all to understand why their presence should prevent my doing so.

Some, indeed, went away—but others entered, and it was past eleven o'clock before we could clear the room and go to bed; but, in

spite of extreme fatigue, it was long before I could sleep. The doors creaked every minute on their rusty hinges; and I fancied, by the fitful glare of the expiring fire, that dark heads and gleaming eyes were looking in upon us. The solemn tones of the old church bell, too, which began to toll, increased the ominous gloom, and I almost regretted we had sent away those nun-like women with the white mantillas, whose presence might perhaps have protected us from their more ferocious companions.

At last I slept; and, on awaking, a bright sun was streaming through the lofty windows, and the Alcalde's pretty daughter was smiling near me. Hers was the first countenance on which I had seen a smile, for a wonderful gloom seemed to pervade the whole establishment. "My mother is not so ill to-day," she whispered, in a gentle voice, "and I hope we shall be able to give you something better for your breakfast, than you had last night." We found that the Alcalde's wife had been dangerously ill, but he did not like to tell us of it, lest we should have scrupled to enter his dwelling.

The pretty girl then withdrew, and I began to rise; but before I had time to get out of bed

she returned again, followed by several women, to whom she had given the apparently joyful tidings of my having awoke. Soon the room was half full of people; and, as the different doors opened, I saw with great dismay that several men were about to enter.

I entreated the pretty daughter to prevent their entrance, and to withdraw the whole party. She could not understand my objection to have a regular levée at my toilette, but with great good humour she and her sedate companions slowly departed. I felt very stiff and uncomfortable, and as if I could never undertake the long ride of twelve hours which must be performed before we could reach the French frontier.

As soon as I was dressed, the Alcalde came in, and expressed his regret—as well as his broken French would permit—that the severe illness of his wife prevented things from being as well as he could wish.

On going down stairs, I saw through an open door the poor mistress of the house in bed, surrounded by at least a dozen nun-like figures. Three or four were kneeling on each side of her, and the others were standing in a row behind them. A profound stillness reigned in the

room, and the pale countenance of the poor sufferer, and the sedate looks and praying attitudes of her attendants, put me in mind of the sculptured forms on some of the old monuments in our English churches.

Certainly, the Spaniards must have the organ of order strongly developed, or a great taste for symmetry. In each church I have entered there were always figures kneeling and standing in regular rows, with candles placed on the ground before them at equal distances ; and thus whole groups, forming as it were patterns, were scattered over and adorned the building.

END OF VOL. I.

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TOWN OF CASTEL-LEON

With the Villages of Villamos and Bebos (Spain)

THE PYRENEES

WITH

EXCURSIONS INTO SPAIN

BY

LADY CHATTERTON,

AUTHOR OF

"RAMBLES IN THE SOUTH OF IRELAND," "HOME SKETCHES,"

ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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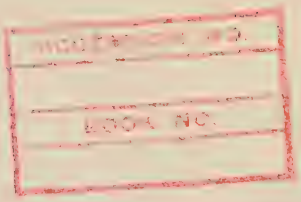

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THE PYRENEES

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CHAPTER I.

Excursion into Catalonia continued—Castel Leon—Spanish villages — Bosost — Delightful bathing-place at Lès — Horrors of Carlist warfare.

Lès, July 21*st.*—At a sort of chateau inn, kept by a pleasant French couple. Still on Spanish ground, but in a most delightful, and, strange to say, comfortable spot! Charmed, indeed, we were to take refuge, in this coolest of rooms, from the great heat and fatigue of our long morning's ride from Viella, and the little bustling couple who keep this excellent house have done everything to make us happy.

We were up this morning at five. Our host, the Alcalde of Viella, had promised café au lait for our breakfast, and I looked forward with much pleasure to a hot cup of

coffee, as some indemnification for the bad fare of last night. There was, however, a long delay in its appearance, and on going to the kitchen to ascertain the cause, we found that they wished to serve it up in a gilt china coffee-pot and ewer, evidently the pride of the establishment; these were, however, held in such high estimation, that, for fear of cracking them with the hot liquids, the wise "Moza" was allowing the coffee and milk to cool before she poured them in. When, at length, breakfast was served up, we found the coffee-pot occupied with the milk, and the milk-jug with the coffee—one of those laughable incidents of travel we look back upon with pleasure, and which, on a return to civilization, give a zest to its enjoyments.

In the kitchen a number of peasants were assembled, taking their breakfast before they went to work; it was a kind of soup, with potatoes and other unrecognisable things, and was, unlike our coffee, very hot. In the group were some of the pretty faces with which this valley abounds. The females wear white handkerchiefs on their heads, sometimes crossed beneath the chin, and tied under it, but the ends

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THE CONVENT OF MILTZARRAN IN THE VALLEY OF ARRAN - CATALONIA

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are usually permitted to flow over the shoulders, in the true mantilla fashion. They have generally large black eyes, high foreheads, with a serious expression of countenance, a sedate air, and their figures well made and erect.

The porteurs were so well satisfied with us, that they proposed to take me free of charge to a place, I think, called Aros, whence they would return to Luchon by the mountains. To this piece of gallantry we acceded: before we started, we made some purchases from our host, and visited the church. It is an old and curious building, with the richly gilt altar, à l'Espagnole, occupying the eastern extremity.

About seven, we started from Viella, and retraced our steps as far as Aubert, stopping some minutes, en route, to inspect the old church at Mitz-aran, where Pompey is said to have built an altar; and after returning to my chaise à porteurs, I sketched the view which is here given.

We continued in the valley on the right bank of the river, enjoying, in the brilliant sunshine of this morning, the sight of the heights which the mist of yesterday evening obscured; and thus, by an excellent road, reached Castel Leon. I made a sketch of the town, with Villa,

Hermosa, and Bebos, on the opposite bank of the Garonne, which is given at the beginning of this volume. Castel Leon is a well-built town, much cleaner and more respectable-looking than Viella. Its "Plaza de la Constitution" is a square of regular houses, and, notwithstanding its "liberal" name, seems to have suffered less in the Carlist wars than most other towns in the neighbourhood; yet few of the large houses appear to be inhabited, and the place looks more than half deserted.

After leaving the town, we had a very rough descent, and then passed the junction of the two branches of the Garonne, and watched the logs as they were occasionally hurried along. The banks of the river now became closer, as it forces its way through a body of rock, where it forms a fine cascade.

We were now approaching the frontier, as was announced by the appearance of an outlying douanier, a poor, miserable-looking fellow, who seemed greatly in want of the franc we gave him. We soon after reached Aros, where our honest chairmen left us: I gave them an additional franc a-piece, and they were most grateful for what they called our kindness to

them: certainly no set of men were more deserving of it.

A new arrangement was now necessary, so as to allow me to ride W——'s horse, to which the side-saddle was transferred: he mounted the baggage-horse, and Benoit walked, leading my horse, and we contrived to make a kind of side-saddle for my maid, and thus we advanced towards Bosost: the valley here very fine. A great rocky height, covered with pines, is a striking object.

I was very sorry to part with my luxurious chair, particularly as the heat soon became so intense that even the Spanish muleteers seemed to suffer from it. The flies, too, tormented my horse to such a degree, that I could scarcely keep my seat for its sudden starts; but the scenery was so lovely, and the wild flowers and butterflies so wonderfully beautiful, that I sometimes almost forgot my aching frame and fast-sinking strength. Near Bosost, the rocks on each side form natural terraces, raised one above the other far up the mountain-side: these were covered with vines growing in luxuriant festoons from one tree to the other.

At Bosost, the most miserable-looking place

I ever saw, we found a poor Frenchman who had been detained from something being wrong about his passport. I began to tremble when ours was demanded, for to be imprisoned in such a filthy place would have been dreadful indeed. It was necessary to get a custom-house pass here, so we were all marched to the police station, which delayed us some time. A miserable policeman made a bother about our passport, the chief officer looked at it topsy-turvy, and then shook his aged head at us, with an ominous expression of doubt and suspicion, and detained us still longer. He was so ignorant, he could hardly read or write; and so obstinate that he would not be assisted. He demanded, also, two francs, which, according to M. Badin, was quite an imposition.

We at last got out of Bosost, without seeing its old church, which is worth a visit, and, with a scorching sun, continued our road, luckily resisting Benoit's inclination to stop, it being too early for us, only about half-past ten. But I was almost in despair at the extreme heat, and the prospect of another five hours' fly-tormented ride, and no place to stop at except some such miserable village as that from which we had just

escaped. The road, too, now became very rough: a narrow and bad staircase, ascending and descending among the rocky heights overhanging the river. We kept along its left bank until our arrival at Lès, where is a bridge, over which the road passes. As we crossed, a small raft with three men on it was hurried along the river with great velocity, and seemed a most perilous mode of conveyance.

Lès is a village like the rest, and at first sight held out nothing inviting. We had passed through it, and I thought we were to go on to the next, when, to my great delight, we turned up an avenue shaded with trees, and soon found ourselves in this comfortable house. I cannot express the joy we felt at arriving in this beautiful spot, and entering the cool, shady avenue which leads through terraced gardens, full of fruit and flowers. Above all, the cool room into which we were shewn, with comfortable sofas and chairs; which were once covered with brocaded velvet, but the Carlist troops, who plundered the house last year, tore the covers wantonly off, only leaving here and there a bit: the excuse was to make themselves waistcoats. The salon, in a morning like this, is delicious, so that we

were fortunate indeed. The proprietor is M. Badin, who has built the baths beyond the town, and is now constructing an hotel for its accommodation. Hegave us an excellent dinner, and I afterwards dozed away an hour most delightfully.

Our active little host presented us with a printed description of the baths. From it, I learn that the Valley of Aran is seven leagues long and five wide. It contains thirty-two towns and villages, sixty-nine churches, and about twenty-thousand inhabitants. It was well known to the Romans, who had bathing establishments at Lès and elsewhere. This valley belonged to the Counts de Comminges; and, in 1198, was ceded to Alphonso, King of Aragon, as the marriage portion of his wife, the daughter of Bernard, Count de Comminges, and since then has belonged to Spain.

In spite of fatigue and heat, W—— could not refuse our host the pleasure of shewing him the baths, which are sulphureous, and resemble those of Cauterets and St. Sauveur. They are situated beyond Lès, on the left bank of the river, about ten minutes' walk from our chateau. The baths, twenty in number, are good, and on the

upper story are four small bed-rooms, which are let at a franc a-day each, and are very convenient for those who take the waters. M. Badin gave a sad account of the sufferings which this valley underwent during the late war, from the inroads of the Carlists ; who, even if only half the accounts be true, seem to have acted with a degree of ferocity not to be met with in savage life—and that, too, towards their own countrymen.

Viella was plundered and half destroyed; women and children cruelly treated, and turned naked into the streets. They attacked the house of a Carlist in the valley, which, though belonging to one of their own party, they plundered, shot the owner, and compelled the widow to bring wood to burn the body of her husband. In another place, they seized upon a priest whom they thought hostile to them, and actually nailed red-hot horse-shoes on his bare feet! They levied a heavy contribution on Viella, and insisted on receiving from one of the principal inhabitants ten thousand francs. As he could not pay it, they resolved to carry him off, but being a very old man, who would probably have died on the road, his son prevailed on them to take him in his father's place. As only part of the money

arrived at the appointed time, they gave their prisoner "dix coups de baton," promising a double dose each day until the ransom was paid; and so they went on; at last a compromise was made for six thousand francs.

Badin himself, and family, fled; but the house was plundered, the soi-disant officer of the party taking some fine shirts for himself; and we saw the chairs in the salon, from the backs and cushions of which the Carlists had cut off the damask. The loss of his fine shirts seems to have affected poor Badin far more than the other atrocities he spoke of.

We remained with our host and hostess—whom we found as reasonable in their charges as they were active in dispensing their civilities and comforts—until five; and then started, the best possible friends.

I never enjoyed four hours more than those we spent at Lès, nor ever had a more delicious nap than that into which I fell after the pretty Spanish girl had removed our dinner and given me a cup of Tisane de Tilleul, which our excellent hostess strongly recommended, and I found most refreshing.

CHAPTER II.

Last view of the Maledetta—Return to France—Valley of Fors—St. Beat—Visit to St. Bertrand de Comminges.

The evening was now cool and delicious, and we had a delightful ride to St. Beat. M. Badin asserted that two Englishmen had come to his house, having driven up the valley from that place with a pair of horses. Our guide said it was impossible, and I quite agree with him. We soon left the fertile little plain near the "chateau;" and as the river had now to force its way through rocks, the roads partook of the same rough character, winding, like a bad staircase, above the torrent; but the scenery was splendid.

From the last little hamlet in Spain—called, I think, Pontau—the view is beautiful. A projecting red rock advances into the Garonne, and forces it to change its direction; then, on

the other side, a lofty and abrupt elevation is crowned, apparently on its very edge, by the village of Camjan. A high bridge over the stream is a fine object, and as we ascended we caught a good view of the Maledetta, and recognised the heights we were so near yesterday. This struck me as the most picturesque part of the whole valley of Aran; and here we took our last view of the Maledetta. A bend in the road would the next moment suddenly deprive us of the magnificent prospect we had hitherto enjoyed, so we lingered a few minutes, and turned round to take a last look on the Queen of the Pyrenees, and sketch the romantic scene.

The road was rough and undulating all the way, till we approached the French frontier, and the valley gradually became so narrow as to leave only room for the path and the rushing Garonne. Near the Pont du Roi, it assumed a stern and desolate character; and, as the sun's rays were completely shut out, I felt its gloom, and began to think of Carlist horrors, and to expect that every group of ferocious looking Catalans we met would detain and rob us; but no such disagreeable adventure occurred; and soon afterwards we reached the Pont du

Roi, the narrow boundary between Spain and France. Here some Spanish custom-house officers were stationed, and a little delay occurred in the examination of our passport. They appeared much surprised that we should travel for pleasure by such an unfrequented road, and eyed us, I thought, with no small degree of suspicion ; but fortunately our Bosost permit enabled us to pass. The river is here so confined by rocks as to be very narrow. Having crossed the bridge, we were again in France, and soon came to an excellent post-road.

We were now properly in the Valley of Fors : it is beautiful, of considerable width, and bounded by great wooded heights. Before us, the Pic du Gar came into view ; both it and the river Garonne derive their names from Gar, a deity of the Gauls. Near the neat little village of Fors is a pretty waterfall, and it is surmounted by the ruins of a fine old castle. We re-crossed the Garonne at Fors, and moved along on a flat, excellent road through a charming valley—I suppose that of St. Beat. The Pic du Gar, and a great height near it, tower above ; and, long after the sun had set with us, we saw its rays lighting up the summits of these giants.

The approach to St. Beat is the best part of the valley, and perfectly lovely: the town lies in the gorge which separates it from the lower valley—that of Estenos: and the passage is so narrow that the rock is close to the houses. We found our courier and the carriage in possession of the best inn (M. Fontan's), but still a bad one—had we not slept at Viella last night, I should have said *very* bad. Indeed, the intense pleasure I felt at getting safe back into France again cannot be described; and yet I was equally enchanted at setting my foot on Spanish ground when we entered Aragon.

These varieties, and the delight of seeing new countries, and equal enjoyment of returning again to another one loves and knows well, constitute the chief pleasure of travelling; and then, perhaps, the greatest of all, is the return to one's own dear home in England. Another great pleasure which accompanies travelling, though it cannot be called a part of it, is, that of making projects —the excitement of planning, of travelling in imagination, and lingering with delight on the map: there, all is sun-shine—yet never too hot. In the quiet of one's cool room, everything looks and feels delicious; and though long experience ought to tell us, that, in the fairest scenes, suf-

ferings and inconveniences must be felt; yet we forget this, and are willingly blind to all but pleasant anticipations. It is fortunate that we are not taught by past experience to expect ill.

St. Beat seems to me more worth seeing than any place I have visited on the French side of the Pyrenees, and that part of the Valley of Luchon which comes down near it, by far the most lovely; yet, strange to say, nobody seems to come here. The inn is tolerable; though our room, the best in the house, is rather cut-throat-looking. It has high, dark rafters, and two closets, receptacles for beds and dust; one of them opens on a dark staircase, and over them are two windows looking down into our bed-room from smaller ones above. But all this suspicious gloom is rather redeemed by some good carvings on the old walls, in the Louis XIV. style;—and above all, by getting back to the dear carriage, kettle, and other comforts. I was, however, actually too tired to eat or do anything, and felt so ill that I thought I was going to have a bad fever. Afraid of being laid up in such a remote place, we sent off to order post horses from Estenos for the next morning, to take us to Bagnères de Bigorre. However, I awoke, thank God! so much re-

stored by a good night's rest, that we almost regretted to leave such a very lovely neighbourhood. The delightful, and to me most unusually sound sleep I enjoyed, put me in mind of some beautiful lines Mr. H—— repeated to us, the other day, from a tragedy of Beaumont and Fletcher:—

> "Come, charming Sleep! thou easer of all woes,
> Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose
> On this afflicted prince; fall like a cloud,
> In gentle showers; give nothing that is loud
> Or painful to his slumbers; easy, sweet,
> And, as a purling stream, thou son of Night,
> Pass by his troubled senses; sing his pain,
> Like hollow, murmuring wind, or silver rain.
> Into this prince, gently, oh! gently glide,
> And kiss him into slumbers like a bride."

We were up at five the next morning, and went out before breakfast to see the position of St. Beat, which is very singular. The town and the Garonne, here much reduced in breadth, occupy the narrow pass, which is formed by abrupt rocky heights of considerable elevation. That in front of the hotel contains the principal marble quarry; its projections, mingled with trees and brush-wood, make it of "great value" in the view. We had not time to go up to the

quarry, which is of white marble, and decided on seeing one of red and white, not so far off.

We started under the guidance of a little girl, the daughter of the inn-keeper, crossed the bridge, and turning to the left passed the old church, which is not remarkable, and the ruin of an old tower, which once defended the entrance on this side. The narrow gateway has been removed for the convenience of a modern passage. After a walk of a few minutes from the town, we turned up a gorge to the left, and reached the quarry. It is of a fine red and white marble, but is not now worked; we saw a block of great size, partly cut.

Seeing we had time to spare,—as the horses were not ordered until eight, we sent our little guide home, and ascended by a path which continued up the valley, so as to reach the old tower of Lès (another village of the same name as our delightful Spanish retreat). This tower had a beautiful effect yesterday evening, backed by the Pic du Gar, and we thought, by climbing up to it, again to have seen that fine mountain; but though disappointed in this, we had a beautiful view over the valley we passed through yesterday. Returning to

the town, the ruin of the old castle above it appears to great advantage.

We were very glad once more to get to the comforts of our carriage and books, and on a beautiful morning, by an admirable road, drove through the charming valley which opened upon us on leaving St. Beat, whose bridge we again crossed; but now turned to the left, under a gate-way, and through a street so narrow, as barely to permit a carriage to pass. We again crossed the river, and passed the road leading to Luchon, and in little more than half an hour reached the relai at Estenos; here we arranged with the postmaster to pay six francs and a half additional for the detour by St. Bertrand de Comminges.

It is well worth a visit, and a longer one than we paid it. The position, on a considerable height, in a rich country, is very striking, and the church a great curiosity. Comminges was the Lugdunum Convenarum of the Romans, and a considerable place; many remains have been found in the neighbourhood, particularly at Valcalrère, (Vallis Caprurum) which was one of its faubourgs.

During the early period of the French history, in the struggle of Gondeband for the crown, in

the year 585, it was totally destroyed, and thus remained till the beginning of the twelfth century, when the famous St. Bertrand undertook to raise it from its ruins: he was a man of good family, and originally a warrior; but, as I related in the legend, he afterwards became Bishop of Comminges.

He lived for fifty years at the modern Lugdunum, and died there, so much in the odour of sanctity, that great miracles are attributed to him; amongst others, the destruction of a terrible serpent, which ravaged the neighbourhood. In attestation of the miracle, the skin is hung up in the church, which, however, is that of a tolerably-sized crocodile; by what miracle he changed his abode from the Nile to these mountains, is not recorded. St. Bertrand was sainted by Alexander III., and his fête is now held here with great veneration.

The town was called after him, and St. Bertrand de Comminges became a great bishopric. The attraction of the church is its beautiful carving in wood: this was done in the reign of Francis I. The organ is very rich and beautiful, and the enclosure of the choir is ornamented with heads in high relief, of very fine workmanship. These

carvings, and the painted glass, were the gift of the Bishop of Maubon, in 1551. There is in the church a beautiful monument, in perfect preservation, that of Bishop Hugo de Castellion, who finished the church, and died in 1351.

This monument is in white marble, the figure of the Bishop—larger than life, and in his robes, which are most elaborately ornamented—lies on the top. The sides are occupied with bas-reliefs of inferior execution, representing the funeral. The church was falling to ruin, and its clergyman pulled down the cloisters, to provide funds for the repair of the roof. This was unlucky, for, had he waited, the cloisters might have been preserved, as the church is now a " monument Français," and, as such, kept in repair by the government.

In the part of the cloister that remains, are some sepulchres of a very ancient date; those of some members of the chapter. It has ceased to be a bishopric, and is now, I believe, attached to Toulouse, and poor St. Bertrand is a deserted, miserable-looking place, in the midst of the apparent prosperity around it. The view from the cloisters, and from the little terrace at the entrance of the town, is very fine, and of great extent.

The Counts of Comminges were formerly of great consideration, and their territory was of vast extent, it was annexed to the crown of France in the reign of Charles VII., and the history of its annexation is curious.

In the fourteenth century, Marguerite, being an only child, became the representative of the family. She was twice married very happily; but without having had children. After the death of her second husband, she was induced to marry Matthieu de Foix, who was attracted more by the rich possessions of Marguerite, than by her merits. He behaved well for some time; but at last his real object became apparent, by his demand that she should endow him with all her property. This she refused, upon which he shut her up in prison, where she remained for nearly twenty-four years, until the year 1443, when a faithful servant contrived to inform Charles VII. of her sufferings.

The King was then at Montauban, and immediately gave orders that the unfortunate Countess should be released. She accompanied her benefactor to Poitiers, where she soon after died, and, as a mark of her gratitude and devotion, she bequeathed her property to the Crown.

After a very interesting stroll in the old town, we rejoined the carriage, which we had left at the bottom of the hill, and proceeded to Montrejean. What a difference position makes! As we descended the valley of the Garonne, it seemed tame and uninteresting, in comparison to its beauties on approaching Luchon.

CHAPTER III.

Return to Bagnères de Bigorre—French table-d'hôte.—Comparison between the Pyrenean and German bathing-places—Departure for Argeles—Ride to the valley of Salles—St. Savin.

Bagnères de Bigorre.—Wednesday, July 21.—And now, after all, I am most enchanted to return to our comfortable apartments at the Hôtel de France, Bigorre—the rooms I praised and described just a fortnight ago, from whence we enjoy the pleasant-sounding bells, Moorish minaret, garden, balcony, and all. We were fortunate to get the same we occupied before: the Duke de Montpensier only left them this morning. He has gone over the mountains by Arreau to Luchon. Part of his suite are preparing for departure in the rooms above, making a most tremendous *tapage* over our heads. It began to rain to-day just after we left Montrejean, about

three o'clock, and all the distant snow mountains were veiled by clouds ; a tiresome occurrence, as we wished much to see them en masse, now that we have climbed up some of them, and become acquainted with the particular forms of many. The Duke de Montpensier will not see Luchon, nor, indeed, the road there, to advantage.

Thursday, 22.—And he will, I fear, have the same dark, melancholy weather there that we had ; it pours rain to-day, and did so all last night. The clouds are so low that I can scarcely see even the wood at the end of this little street ; but, in spite of rain, the aspect of this place produces the same cheering effect on my spirits it did before—though we saw it first in drizzling rain, and the sun did not shine here till the morning we left it. Nothing to me is so unaccountable as the cheering or depressing effect which different places have on my spirits. In some, I seem actually in Paradise, and in others (like poor Luchon !) I feel quite miserable.

I have come back so brown after all our mountain expeditions, that I hardly know my own face in the nice Parisian looking-glasses here. We are much surprised at the high price of

everything in these Pyrenean baths; so much dearer than in Germany; and it is a comfort to know that this cannot be attributed to the English, for they are chiefly frequented by French; there was, indeed, only one English family among all the visitors at Luchon. The manner of living is much less sociable than in Germany: few tables d'hôte, no parties—nothing to bring people together; everything appears less cheerful, less primitive. Ladies, indeed, are much better dressed here, but they do not look half so happy or cheerful. Certainly, the superior beauty of the scenery compensates for much; still I delight in the "bad" life of Germany. I say nothing of low prices and facility of conveyance, which are great advantages; but its early hours, the pleasant, well-instructed, intellectual Germans, and travellers of other nations, to be met with at the tables d'hôte, the beautiful music with which the ear is gratified, all this is more soothing, as well as exhilarating, to the spirits of an invalid, than even the splendid scenery of the Pyrenees. The Germans give me the idea of being the happiest, the most rationally happy, people on earth; and nothing does one so much good as to look on happiness.

The French are, perhaps, more fascinating, more gay, and often pleasanter, for the present moment, but their conversation does not leave such agreeable impressions on the mind, and seldom is so profitable ; it is more brilliant, but not half so just. I have seldom talked for an hour with a well-educated German without feeling I had gained something—at all events, acquired food for thought. The French make one laugh, and their lively wit is delightful, but they very seldom make one think. The middle classes of Germans appear much more civil than persons of the same rank in France. I doubt whether Frenchmen of the present day are so civil as those of other countries ; perhaps, because they have had the reputation of being more so, and therefore take less trouble. We laughed a good deal at a scene we witnessed at the table d'hôte yesterday, where a Frenchman, after helping himself to all the best pieces of the roast fowl, turned to the lady next him, and said, with a most insinuating smile, " Madame, ne mange pas de volaille ?"

Evening.—This has been a day of the most decided rain I ever saw. We dined at the table d'hôte, and sat near an agreeable Frenchman,

who went up the Porte de Venasque on Sunday last, the day before us. He spoke very feelingly of its dangers, and said his friend was nearly precipitated down into an abyss. He thought it was much more dangerous to walk than to remain on horseback. He said, nothing would have induced him to trust his own feet on those awful, corkscrew paths, covered as they were with snow ; and when he heard that men carried me in a chair safely over them, he thought it an absolute miracle. The bad weather prevented his seeing the Lac d'Oo, or scarcely any of Luchon's lions.

Saturday, 24.—We did not much fancy the table d'hôte on Thursday, so we dined yesterday in our own rooms, and went to the H——s in the evening. Only themselves—but she was very pleasant. Told us it was her ancestor who, in ancient times, destroyed a serpent which infested the country near Bayonne, for which service the descendants received some rents, even as late as the Revolution. She has seen the skin of the animal ; and it was kept in the church, like that of St. Bertrand.

Looked at lodgings in the morning, and saw some very good for six or eight francs a-day, in

pleasant situations. This is the only place we have yet seen where one could live at all cheap as well as comfortable. Mrs. H—— had a very good dinner brought from Hôtel du Grand Soleil for five francs, which served for three. We might live there for less than half what we pay at this hotel; but we are afraid to move, lest fine hot weather should make us long for the mountains.

The H——s passed some time at Agen on the Garonne, and intend to go there again this winter; they spoke in high terms of its climate, beauty of scenery, and pleasant society. We had a delightful drive to-day, with Mrs. H——, through the Valley of Campan. It is well and neatly cultivated, but there is nothing luxuriant or southern-looking in the vegetation, nothing strikingly beautiful in the scenery; on the contrary, the straight even fields, unadorned by hedge-rows, and the little round clumps of trees, which grow here and there on the lower heights, have a very formal air. The day was fine, the air pleasant, and the conversation of my companion charming, so that we saw the far-famed Valley of Campan to great advantage. Its fortified churches are very picturesque; they

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have projecting towers at each corner of the spire. We went into the church at the village of Campan, whose gorgeous altar, richly gilt, proves the neighbourhood of Spain.

There are many pretty views near the town, and I have done nothing but sketch from all the windows, and in all directions, since we arrived. Indeed, I have drawn so much in the Pyrenees that I fear I shall not touch a pencil for a long time when once we leave these scenes. I think we should aim at moderation in everything. The greatest dangers which beset our path seem to me to proceed from our running into extremes. We do or pursue a thing too much and too violently; then we get frightened at our excess, and relinquish it entirely. Thus, we are immoderate even in our fears.

Called on Madame de C—— B——, who shewed us a Gascon poem, written by a barber, called Jasmin, which she says is very pretty, and compared his poetry to that of Reboul, the baker of Nismes. Some of the visitors here started last night, in the midst of thunder and rain, to a bear hunt in the Valley of Campan, where two bears had lately killed five cows.

Monday, July 26th.—We have just had a fire

lighted. It still continues raining, and is very cold. The H——s have scarcely passed a day this summer without a fire. In our visits of yesterday, we found fires everywhere; it was the same thing when we were here three weeks ago: yet this is usually the warmest of all the Pyrenean baths, and reckoned one of the hottest places in the south of France. We walked to the Salut, and part of the way to Elysée Cottin.

Argeles, Tuesday evening.—This morning looked rather promising, so we made up our minds to come here, and left Bigorre about eleven. The scenery of this place, and indeed, during the drive from Lourdes, is perfect loveliness, only equalled by parts of the Valley of Aran and the neighbourhood of St. Beat. After our arrival, about two o'clock, we walked near the town till dinner time; and since that important meal, which was extremely good (at the tolerable Hotel du Commerce, the best of the two), I mounted a donkey, and rode up to the Balandrau. There we had a delightful view of the valley, both ways, and its branches, so well known and often described, generally considered the gem of the Pyrenees. So we luxuriated over it, and sat down on the

heath, under the shade of one of those splendid chesnut trees which embellish the scenery here so much. As the donkey went well, and its little guide was intelligent, we yielded to the temptation of a most inviting path, leading higher up the mountain, and proceeded to explore the valley of Ozun. It is adorned with fine oaks and chesnuts, and with the largest walnut trees I ever saw. We crossed its green lawns and vineyards to the valley of Salles, where at one moment the park-like scenery reminded us of England; then, wild forest glades succeeded, where we expected to see a troop of Spanish banditti emerge from the tangled fern and underwood; then a peaceful, vine-clad village appeared, where pretty children played, and old women sat with their spinning-wheels before the cottage-doors, enjoying the last slanting rays of the setting sun. In short, the whole scene was full of vivid and striking, yet harmonious contrasts. I had, however, a strange sort of feeling, as if it had all appeared to me before in a dream:

> "Moreover, something is, or seems,
> That touches me with mystic gleams,
> Like glimpses of forgotten dreams.

> " Of something felt, like something here;
> Of something done, I know not where;
> Such as no language may declare."

We had, now and then, beautiful views over the sister valley of Argeles and its fine boundary of mountains. The village of Salles lies nestled between a woody height and the high mountains, and the way there and all about it is beyond description lovely. It was late when we returned, and a young moon shed its gentle silvery light over the scene.

On our arrival at Argeles, we drove to the Hotel de la Paix, just opposite to this, and which had been much more recommended; but as we did not like the rooms, we resolved to try our fortune here, and certainly made a good exchange. These little inns at the small Pyrenean towns which are not bathing-places would be very well if the floors were kept clean, but I believe they are never washed; and when the people make an attempt at cleanliness, it is a most disagreeable one, by sprinkling the boards with water. This only converts into mud the coating of dirt, and is not many degrees better than the street. The linen here, however, was perfectly clean, the beds good, and the fare excellent. We

have tried to persuade the girl in future to give up the sprinkling system, and wash the floors; if this were done, or if they were dry rubbed, the little Hotel du Commerce would be very charming.

Wednesday, 28*th*.—We had a fine morning for our excursion to St. Savin. We started at seven, and at first kept the high road to Pierrefitte. After descending the hill of Argeles, the road is perfectly flat, and perfection as to make—the best specimen possible of Macadamization. The rapid mountain-streams give great facility for mills, and sawing timber seems an active trade here. A new bridge, which will be a great improvement, is now being built across the Gave d'Azun, whose valley is said to be very beautiful.

After passing through a small village, we turned to the right, near a great stone, according to the direction we had received, and then ascended towards St. Savin. The greater part of the way, the road passes through ground planted with fine trees, generally chesnuts. So much is it shaded—a great luxury this hot morning—that the view of the valley is almost shut out. After a walk of about three-quarters of an hour, we

reached the little village, which is very small, with arcades of the rudest kind to the houses.

The church is a very singular one, of great antiquity; built by Charlemagne, on the ruins, as is supposed, of a Roman fort. It once belonged to a convent, and is now sadly out of repair, and was exposed to all manner of injury and profanation during the Revolution. The clergyman, whom we fortunately met, gave a melancholy account of his want of funds to support the church. Sixty francs a-year is all that is appropriated for that purpose. He says it has been recognised by the government as one of the "monuments historiques de la France;" but only five hundred francs were sent for its repair, when eleven thousand were required. Charlemagne built the church when here, prosecuting his wars against the Moors. St. Savin was a Spaniard of great celebrity; and some old pictures, not badly executed, in the style of Cimabue, represent the miracles of the saint. These paintings have inscriptions in the Gaulic dialect, and are in very good preservation. The altar, rich in marble, shews that the monks paid great attention to their church. From the garden of the old monastery, the view of the valley is

very beautiful. This was a piece of information we received after we had quitted the place, and we must recollect it for our next visit.

We made a rapid descent, and got home in about half an hour; though we stopped on the road to answer a poor widow's inquiries as to the Duke of Montpensier, for whom she had a petition. She shewed us the petition: it was signed by the mayor, stating that the woman was a widow, and her case one of great distress; alleging, at the same time, the impossibility of the commune to do anything for her, as the crops, during the last season, were destroyed by hail. This simple allusion to an event that must have visited numbers with suffering and distress was very touching. These visitations are but too common in the Pyrenees.

We returned home, before nine, to an excellent breakfast, and at half-past eleven started for Pierrefitte, on our way to Luz. After leaving Argeles, the road was perfectly flat all the way, and of the best description; fields protected on the road side by large slates. Passed close under the height, on which stands St. Savin and the prominent church beyond it, from whence the view of this charming valley must be very fine. We

afterwards ascertained this to be the case on our way from Cauterets to the Valley of Azun. It is a good plan to ride or walk by St. Savin, between Pierrefitte and Argeles: this fine view may then be seen.

We passed on our right, in a delightful position on the height above, in the midst of trees and vegetation, a campagne, which, seen from the road, is one of the most striking I have met with. But, alas, this is one of the objects in life which cannot bear a close inspection! We saw it on the 17th, on our way to Azun, and found that it is almost a ruin; a nouveau riche, a peasant has purchased and neglects it. According to the rate we paid from Argeles (16 kilometres), there should remain only three to Pierrefitte: we paid for eight—a little instance of posting trickery, which is to be found even in the Pyrenees. We saw the new line of road to Cauterets, winding up the deep and narrow gorge; at the distance we were, it appeared quite impracticable.

We changed horses at Pierrefitte, and there met two or three wagon-loads of soldier-invalids, returning from Baréges, where is a military hospital.

On leaving Pierrefitte, we crossed the Gave de Marcadan, the rapid torrent which flows through the Valley of Cauterets ; and soon after crossed the Gave de Pau, as it rushes from the neighbouring Valley of Luz ; and still, by a perfectly good and flat road, we entered the defile which leads to that place. We continued along the right bank of the stream, to which the rocks descend so close as to leave barely space between them and it for the narrow road. It is a striking pass, and would be gloomy, if not seen, as we saw it, under the influence of a brilliant sunshine.

We again crossed the river, and then gradually crept upwards to descend to it again ; but the road not sufficiently steep to require the drag. The bridges are of single arches, and well constructed of the coarse marble with which the district abounds.

After passing the third bridge, the " forte montée" began. We walked, and gradually, by an excellent road, reached a great height. The river has forced for itself a passage amidst rocks covered with wood, and occasionally it appeared fretting in its narrow bed, at some hundreds of feet below us. Yet it is on the side of this almost perpendicular ravine that they are now

constructing the new road,—a most daring undertaking in appearance, though I suppose, to the eye of an engineer, not so formidable, as there are no tunnels to make. It will render the Luz road very easy. If my guide be good authority, it is in contemplation to make a carriage road into Spain by Gavarnie.

We walked a considerable distance, nearly to the fourth bridge, as the sharp turns in the road alarmed me. After passing the fourth bridge, we entered the Valley of Luz, and had a charming drive in a comparative flat. At the fifth and last bridge over the Gave de Pau, we left the river, and now advanced through the wider, and consequently more magnificent, valley to Luz. Before reaching the town, we crossed the Gave de Bastan, that most angry of Pyrenean streams, which, when swollen, spreads ruin and desolation all around.

CHAPTER IV.

Luz—Erroneous impressions of the climate usually given—Ascent of the Pic de Bergons—French luxuries and comforts—St. Sauveur.

Luz, three o'clock.—Here we are, established unexpectedly in the most comfortable and pretty lodgings possible. A number of windows looking in all directions, and every one commanding a different and a lovely view. From one, the Pic de Bergons is seen rearing its fantastic head high into the blue sky, above fields, and vineyards, and roofs of cottages. From another, the old ruined castle of St. Marie, which belonged to Edward the Black Prince, surmounts the high pass conducting to Baréges. This part of the picture is gloomy and stern; but just under it, and far below, is the little inn of Luz, where carriages are always coming or going,

and gay riding parties mounting or dismounting, where diligences arrive and disgorge their motley contents—a bit of cheerful, ever-moving life; where happy faces are sure to be seen, either expecting pleasure in the excursion they are going to make, or satisfied with the mountain expeditions they have just finished; and all this under the remains of past greatness—the time-stained towers of St. Marie—which have been the scene of many a direful conflict, and witnessed the feats of our brave Prince Edward.* Another window has a balcony where a profusion of carnations are growing; it looks up the little street, and on the fine mountains of the chain towards Gavarnie, the Brêche de Roland and its eternal snows. Then W——'s dressing-room has a covered balcony which commands the most beautiful view of all, for it looks both up and down the Valley of Luz, with all its crowded forms of beauty and innumerable pictures of grand and sublime scenery. Opposite

* Fourcade says, in his "Album Pyrénéen," that, in 1404, it was taken from the English by Jean de Bourbon, assisted by the inhabitants of Bigorre and Baréges, under D'Auger Conflitte, whose descendants still exist. This castle and Lourdes were the last possessions held by the English in the Pyrenees.

this balcony is another old castle, more ruined than that of St. Marie. It overlooks St. Sauveur and its green walks, and commands the Pass of Gavarnie, the nearest to Spain ; and thus it has suffered probably more than its neighbours, for only one arch remains, and a low wall which encircles the conical height where it stands.

We are, indeed, lucky to enjoy all these varied prospects from rooms that are clean and well furnished. A whole floor to ourselves, and for eight francs a-day.

I have done nothing this last hour but run from room to room and window to window, in an ecstasy of delight, fancying each of the views more beautiful than the other, and luxuriating in their delicious coolness and shaded balconies.

Thursday, 29.—I have just been reading some travels in the Pyrenees, and am surprised at the disapprobation expressed of the inn at Argeles, and of the food at most Pyrenean inns. We always think the fare excellent, better than what is usually met with at English inns ; and as to the complaint of not finding tea or soap, how very easy it is to take a little of each with one. I always carry my own supply of soap, and even in England do not like to use what is

found at inns. Then, what is said about the scanty supply of water and smallness of the basins is certainly unjust. The basins are indeed small, but we have never yet seen a hotel in the Pyrenees (however remote, small, or bad it may be) where a large pan or foot-tub was not to be found. At Argeles, the very place so much complained of, I had, besides three basins, a pan much larger than most English foot-baths; and W—— a sort of hip-bath, full of water, and large enough for a small child to swim in. We found there no dearth of water, hot or cold; and, indeed, comforts of all kinds are much easier to be found than people who have not been long abroad imagine; and it is a pity to frighten invalids who think of travelling, by conjuring up these kind of difficulties, which only arise from helplessness, and a want of determination to get all the comforts one can. We had, too, at Argeles, a dinner which would do credit to the best hotel. On the other hand, I think many tourists mislead the untravelled English by their encomiums on French or foreign climates. I do not think the air of France, north or south, or indeed that of Germany, or even Italy, a bit more exhilarating to the

spirits than the sweet breezes of our own dear England.

My malady, that which I have suffered from since earliest youth, is low spirits; and I have always hoped that some of the southern climes, about which people write in such high terms, might be of use, but I never found the least benefit from them. On the contrary, the only tour that was of any use to me was one we made in Ireland—that poor slandered country of reputed rain, clouds, and discomfort.

I do not mean to say that people misrepresent the happy state of their feelings when travelling on the Continent, but the fact is, they are wrong in attributing the exhilaration they feel to the climate, whereas it probably proceeds from the exciting effect of new scenes, a different country, interesting places, and, perhaps more than any of these, from the fact of their getting away from the cares and torments of housekeeping, and sundry other annoyances which home, sweet home, sometimes entails; above all, to those who write, meaning to publish, there is another and most delicious excitement—the hope of amusing and interesting others.

I suffered last night and this morning from the

most violent headache I almost ever had, the effect of yesterday's hot and nervous walk by the side of precipices; it was too much for me, suffering, as I still am, from the fatiguing days of Venasque and Viella. My idea is, that southern climates are, in general, extremely prejudicial to English constitutions, particularly in summer. Our climate is reckoned changeable, but it is nothing to the vicissitudes of intense heat and cold often experienced here in the same day. Besides this, English people seldom take the same precautions which the natives do; they expose themselves much more to the midday sun, instead of remaining at home and going to sleep.

Friday, 30th—Still ill and quite disabled, unable to accompany W—— up the Pic de Bergons. This is the account he gave me of the expedition:—

"A dry morning, but the clouds looked very unpropitious for an expedition to the Pic du Bergons, yet, at six, my guide came, who gave promise of a fine day. This dissipated my misgivings, and at twenty-five minutes after seven we started—I mounted on a grey *jument*, which proved excellent. Immediately on leaving

the town, we commenced a rough and steep ascent; it improved as we advanced, to change again for what was rougher and more steep. Our road lay by the Lastive, the sheep pasturage immediately behind the town, between it and the Pic de Bergon.

"We were now enveloped in thick fog, and our prospects appeared anything but cheering; even the guide seemed to despond. We met a poor farmer who had his hay to save, and who, when he saw us, exclaimed, 'Mauvais tems pour le moisson, et pas bon pour vous autres.' However, a shepherd boy, whom we afterwards met, cheered us up by saying, he had come down from the top, and 'qu'il y avait le soleil,' and fortunately we found he was correct. As we ascended, which we did very rapidly, the fog seemed to lose its chilly feel; and at last, to my inexpressible delight, it rolled away, and a brilliant blue sky and the mountain-tops became distinctly visible.

"We now arrived at a piece of turf, almost flat compared to what we had climbed, and to that we had still to surmount. Having passed it, we worked up a steep bit, to reach the ridge of the height; this we accomplished in one hour and fifty-eight

minutes, from the time of our departure. Here we left the horses with a shepherd, and in eight minutes, by an ascent by no means steep, and over turf, we reached the top: thus doing in two hours and six minutes what it was said would take three hours. I do not think I ever enjoyed anything more. As we walked towards the top, it seemed as if a new and brilliant creation had just opened upon us—as if we had left the cold, damp world below, shut out by the snow-white clouds which lay beneath. The effect was curious and beautiful; the mist, strongly lighted by a bright sunshine, looked like a sea of frosted silver, and the numerous heights with which I was surrounded, like pointed islands abruptly rising from it.

"The view from the top was to me highly interesting, as I saw from it, most distinctly, the entire chain of the Mont Perdu, the Marboré, Brèche de Roland, Cascade, Amphitheatre, &c. These great heights occasionally looked so near, that I sometimes thought I might see a man, if he happened to be on them. The guide was delighted and astonished at my opera-glass—my "Jumelles centrées," from Chevalier's, which I found of great use. The clouds hovered over the

valley of Argeles, so as to conceal it from my view; however, I sa was far as Pierrefitte; thus the entire gorge was visible, with its ten villages—on the right, Esquiso, Sers, Visos, Saligos, Chezé; and on the left Biscos, Greuzé, Sasos, Sassie, and St. Sauveur. The day was delightful—not a breath of wind, neither too hot nor too cold; though the height is considerable. On a bed of snow in a hollow, a long way below, a flock of sheep were luxuriating. I attempted to take an outline of the amphitheatre of heights around me, and to give them, as well as I could, in writing, their names as pronounced by my guide; rather an indistinct proceeding.

"I remained one hour and eight minutes on the top, and left it with regret. In about a quarter of an hour after joining the horses, we re-entered the mist, and for half an hour all was obscurity; yet not without its effect, for it gave a greater apparent steepness to the path, and we seemed to be plunging into a great abyss. I walked a considerable way, though more from choice than necessity—my little mare would have carried me quite safely. When we regained the Lastive, the fog was left behind, and we had a beautiful view of the valley of Luz. I got down in an

hour and twenty minutes, to G——'s great surprise and delight: she did not expect me for a couple of hours more."

These narrow Pyrenean valleys have, I think, a peculiarly depressing effect on the spirits; other travellers whom we have met feel it as much as I do, though great admirers of fine scenery. I admire this place immensely, but still the very exquisiteness of its grandeur, loveliness, and sublimity seems to depress me. As for Luchon, I felt, at the end of our twelve days' rainy séjour there, as if in a vast grave.

Then, these valleys being, for carriage-travelling, all culs de sac, the conviction that one must return the way one came—that there is no other outlet except over nearly inaccessible mountains—gives an uncomfortable and half-imprisoned feel; particularly to those who, like me, never ride for the sake of riding, and only mount a horse because it is the sole means of seeing fine scenery. I am too timid to ride in the green lanes of England, where there is no danger; yet here I encounter all these stair-case roads, and on the brinks of precipices. Perhaps these efforts beneath the hot sun, and unusual fatigue, have tended to unhinge my nerves and spirits.

Yet we are in great luxury here. The air of this place seems to me peculiarly fresh and pleasant. It is situated on a little height in its own deep valley, and some of our windows look down upon the far-off entrance to it, which is the only speck of low horizon ; and I find my eyes always turn with delight to that single small bit of low sky, even after contemplating the exquisite beauties which surround me. Our position is most amusing too, for the road between St. Sauveur and Baréges, which passes close under our windows, seems the great promenade of all the gay bathers and riders.

The toilette at the Pyrenean baths is very récherchée. A party has now passed by on donkeys, the ladies looking as if they had just issued from the hands of Palmyre and Herbault, and the gentlemen equally fine. Certainly the French ladies have a particular turn for dress and for keeping themselves in order. They manage so well that not a crease is discernible in their pretty muslin or Baréges attire. This does not give the idea of being comfortable, but it is very pretty, for the dresses are in such extreme good taste.

It is amusing to see the ladies mount their

donkeys — the care with which the tournure (bustle) is placed over the saddle; the fantastic riding costume of some—red Spanish sashes, &c.

My idea as to the comfort and luxury of French people is much altered by seeing the excellent accommodation in these bathing-place lodging-houses. Very few English come here, therefore it is solely for the French that they are built, and kept scrupulously clean, and adorned with luxuries and comforts, I think superior to those to be met with in our English *summer* watering-places, with the exception of Brighton and Leamington. Then the luxury of conveyances gives the idea of great wealth: the chaises à porteurs seem to be in constant requisition. At Luchon, a chaise à porteurs costs forty francs a-day, and here thirty. This for the conveyance of one person is a large sum, and sometimes three or four chairs are seen in the same party; so that a day's expedition must be very expensive. The departure of such an expedition, accompanied by guides, horsemen, &c., is an animated sight, and made still more striking by the wild chorus which the carriers sing with excellent effect.

The profusion of marble used in furnishing

the houses is very charming; all our windows have polished marble slabs, and the chimney-pieces, washing-tables, and tops of drawers, are of the beautiful red or purple marble found in these mountains. The door and window-frames are also of marble, which, though not polished, look rich and handsome. Then the bedsteads, doors, and those comfortable large armoires, with which this house is so plentifully furnished, are of different kinds of ornamental wood—and all very pretty.

This is a fine day, but masses of cloud are hovering about the mountains, which I am afraid will sadly obstruct W——'s view. The sun is so intensely hot, that I am very glad to be sheltered from its rays, and that our south windows have solid shutters; yet the breeze which comes through the north casement, at which I am sitting, feels as if it had passed over ice, and is so cold that I am obliged, every now and then, to shut the window. This is the sort of broiling on one side and freezing on the other, which I fancy must be trying to an English constitution.

There is, in the centre of this little town, a very curious old fortified church, a sort of mixture of church and castle, formerly belonging

to the Templars. The door which served as a separate entrance for the poor Cagots was pointed out to us.

We have just been to see a very nice lodging,* a house called Grandet's, recommended to us, but which we forgot. On the whole, we are as well off here, and our windows command a greater variety of prospects; but Grandet's stands in a beautiful garden, which slopes down to the high-road, and has a more uninterrupted view of the valley towards Argeles.

After dinner, I mounted a donkey, and we went up to the ruins of l'Hermitage, on the rocky height overlooking St. Sauveur. They command fine views all over the valley, and up the narrow defile leading to Gavarnie. We lingered there some time to enjoy the view, and watch the slanting sun-beams retire from one mountain-top to the other, with a rosy smile that seemed to wish them each good night. The Pic de Bergon, W——'s friend of the morning, was the last to receive the sun's part-

* The first-floor, ten francs, consists of six bed and two sitting rooms, and a broad terrace over the garden. Besides this, the proprietor has a carriage, which, for two francs, will take one to St. Sauveur every day.

ing kiss, and its green summit glowed with a purple hue that made one quite happy to look on, and seemed to promise a lovely day for to-morrow. I hope never to forget the peculiar beauty of that sunset, or the graceful forms of the rose-coloured clouds that hovered here and there, as if they loved those beautiful mountains :—

> " Too transient, were they not renewed
> From age to age, and did not, while we gaze
> In silent rapture, credulous desire
> Nourish the hope, that memory lacks not power
> To keep the treasure unimpair'd. Vain thought!
> Yet why repine, created as we are,
> For joy and rest, albeit to find them only
> Lodged in the bosom of eternal things?"

We then descended, by a narrow, steep path, to the road that leads to Gavarnie, and then down another, to the torrent which rushes close below St. Sauveur. This we crossed by a little wooden foot-bridge, and wound up, through a garden, to the town. It consists of one narrow street of well-built houses, containing many comfortable apartments. Saw one of six rooms on the wrong side of the street, for which the woman asked fifteen francs a-day, but said she

would take twelve from us. Came home by the regular carriage-road, much pleased with our little excursion of about two hours and a half, and more than ever satisfied with our quarters here.

CHAPTER V.

Castle of Sainte Marie—Beautiful walks—Misery of whip-cracking—Ride to Cascade near St. Sauveur—Gavarnie—Vallée de Gédre—Pont de Scias.

Saturday.—I felt stronger last night, and hoped much to be able to accompany W—— to Gavarnie this morning. The horses were ordered at five, and one with a side-saddle for me, to our guide's great joy, who is most anxious I should see the wonders here; but a sleepless night, and the great anxiety I felt to be able to go, rendered me quite unfit; so I was obliged to be content with dear W——'s enjoyment of this beautiful day. After getting up, to see him start and admire the lovely view from our windows, I went to bed again, refreshed by the delicious morning air. I could not sleep, however, so I read the "Merry Wives of Windsor," and

have ordered a donkey, in the hope of being able to get to the old Castle of Sainte Marie.

Travellers in good health are generally so occupied with distant excursions, that they neglect the little near beauties which often abound; for instance, our last night's little invalid excursion of two hours was most delightful, and W—— said he had seen nothing so lovely in the wider range of his mountain-top expeditions.

The little common walks, which are within the compass of an invalid's powers, are often the most beautiful. I regret Gavarnie the less, because every one goes there, and prefer keeping my little strength for less-frequented excursions, such as the one to Viella, or rather the return from Viella, by the Valley of Aran, to St. Beat. I have never met with any one who had done it; yet the most beautiful part of it might be accomplished by any invalid who can ride. It has, too, the additional attraction of a new country—quite a different race of people, &c. —and is not fatiguing, provided it is not done in mid-day sun-shine, which, in that hot valley, is enough to kill an English person.

One of the greatest miseries of the Pyrenees is the eternal whip-cracking, which echoes with

a peculiar loud and sharp report in these mountain valleys. I wonder how the invalids can bear it; their nerves must be much stronger than those of the English. I am sure in no place in England intended for invalids would that most irritating sound be tolerated. I feel it like a pistol-shot close to my ears.

Started, after breakfast, on my donkey, for Sainte Marie. When we got to the foot of the height on which it stands, I found the path was not practicable for the donkey, so I had a broiling ascent on foot; but was well repaid by the view from the castle over the three valleys it overlooks. The ruins occupy the entire summit of the high mound, and consist of one round and one square tower, nearly perfect, united by a high wall. The old court of the castle is now a garden, and belongs to the proprietor of our house. He gave me the key, which admitted us to its pretty shady walks, and I sat down under some trelliced vines, to enjoy the view, and think of our own dear Prince Edward. My little donkey-girl gave me a most touching account of the laborious life she leads, often walking to Gavarnie and back, besides various courses in the day. The most tantalizing thing about these

Pyrenees, is, that the baths, where alone any comfortable accommodation can be found, are not situated in the prettiest spots. St. Beat, at the beginning of the valley of Luchon, and Argeles, at two hours' distance from here, are the most attractive places I ever saw. One would like to spend months at both of them, so endless does the variety of walks, rides, and mountain and valley excursions appear. But, then, from their being unfrequented, except by passing travellers, they have no guides, no regular horses, &c. I think, in a few years, if the Pyrenees become frequented by the English, all this will be remedied.

W—— has returned home, delighted with the expedition to Gavarnie; his account of which I will insert:—

"I was up at half-past four. A charming morning. At seven minutes after six, M. Ballin (who unites the occupations of guide et chaudronnier, according to the seasons) and myself duly mounted, started for Gavarnie. Before reaching the bridge to St. Sauveur, we turned to the left, and entered a magnificent gorge, in the style of that of Pierrefitte, but finer, as the outline is grander.

"We advanced for about three-quarters of an

hour, by an excellent road; having taken due notice of 'les objêts remarquables' in this part of the excursion—viz., the echo sent back by a perpendicular rock over the river; the Pas d'Echelles, below the present road, which was once the passage, and must have been an awkward business; and the four small mills on the side of the cascade of Scias.

"We then descended a steepish bit *à l'escalier*, to the Pont de Scias: the present bridge is built over the old one, and at some distance above it; both stand over a cataract of the river—the effect is fine; but that of a fall higher up the river is still finer, owing more to the body of water than the height.

"We now ascended by a rougher defile, more wild and open, and with a more scanty supply of trees; box-wood, which occurs in great abundance throughout the mountains, seems here to exclude the growth of much timber. We crossed the river again, and then entered the valley in which lies the hamlet of Bagnéres. We passed its torrent by a bridge, and ascended considerably. Met a woman having a dead izard for sale; she wanted twenty francs for it. She sold it for sixteen francs, as she told us, when

we met on our return. We turned to the left, above some houses, and then entered the valley of Gefre. It is rich, and, in addition to its own heights, here part of the chain of the Amphitheatre comes into view. The Pic de la Fausse Brêche is remarkable for its striped appearance, rock and snow seem to alternate.

" In an hour and twenty-two minutes, we reached the inn at Gedre, and I quietly submitted to what many think a hoax, the inspection of its grotto. To be sure, when on the way to the terrors of the ' Grand Chaos,' and the sublimity of the Amphitheatre, it may seem ridiculous ; but in itself it is a pretty thing. Beneath the grotto, a tolerable-sized torrent falls into a deep basin, in which it foams and roars with considerable effect before it can get out. I paid my ten sous, and re- mounted

" As we advanced, the Pic de Stiverbol, and further on, the Buet, are snow-sprinkled and fine heights on the right. After the supercilious feeling with which I scarcely noticed these heights from the Bergons yesterday, a ride like this is of great use. It was to me a good lesson of humility, shewing how little man is in reality,

that it would take several hours to reach the summit of that which I yesterday so much despised.

"The approaches to Gedre are a good deal in the staircase fashion—the rest of the road very good. The 'Grand Chaos' is, indeed, an awe-inspiring sight. Upset a large basin of lump sugar on an inclined plane, and put a mite to find his way through it, and you may form some idea of man traversing these stupendous blocks, piled one above the other in majestic confusion. I passed through it in silence, and felt as if to speak in such a scene would be a profanation. Its giant parent, the mountain from which it was separated, towers to an immense height above; some little projection detached from its mass, has formed this striking spectacle. Why is it that the 'Chaos' should produce a greater feeling of wonder and awe than the enormous body, of which it once formed so inconsiderable a part? Does this arise from the littleness of man's conception? He compares the one with himself, and all his feelings are awakened, because he can grasp the thought; he sinks before the other, because he has no standard by which he can elevate his mind to its contemplation.

"Roland was just the character for scenes like this. The marks of his horse's hoofs are shewn in the rock, which were imprinted as he jumped from the top of Bilban. His next spring was to the top of Marboré, where he made his famous brêche, by a single cut of his famous sword, Durindana.

"As we advanced, the noble summits of the Marboré were distinctly before us in great splendour. Habitations are scattered over the valleys of Gavarnie, and some are placed at a considerable height up its western boundary. We had now passed the Mont Sinistre, so well deserving the name, and which, on the opposite side of the river, forms the ravine in which lies the 'Grand Chaos.' Its base is covered also with the ruins of its former projections. As we advanced up the valley, Mont Coumelie is on the left. By it, there is a passage into the Valley of Heas, which the Dukes of Orleans and Nemours visited. They were very active, and saw everything; and the Duke de Montpensier seems to be following their example. The Pain de Sucre, a projection of Pic de Pimené, is a fine object. An excursion to the summit of the Pimené may be made from Gavarnie: it must command a noble

view. The Pas de la Corniche connects the two parts of the Valley of Gavarnie, and having passed it, we kept gradually ascending, until a staircase led to the Pont de Lavequi, close to the inn. There is here a cataract of considerable effect. In forty minutes from Gedre, we reached Gavarnie; making the distance, calculated as three hours, in two hours two minutes.

"I only waited at Gavarnie time enough to order my breakfast, from its tall, gaunt, and imposing-looking old landlady. Two parties were already arrived. Lord S—— and my guide had put me up to her character, so I made a bargain for two francs—she asking three, and I offering thirty sous. The amphitheatre appeared quite close, and yet it took an hour to reach the plateau below it, fifty minutes to the place where we left the horses, and ten minutes on foot. After leaving the inn we kept along the side of the river by a tolerable path, then crossed a rather nervous bridge, and ascended a rough ridge, to descend it again, in order to reach a small plain, covered with grass; this, I think, is said to have been a lake. During all this time the sun was very hot, and gave perfect distinctness to every part of the mighty pile before us. Having passed the turf, we had an-

other rocky ascent, when we left our horses, and continued afterwards on foot.

" Still ascending, we reached a torrent, which I crossed ; then a piece of snow, which usually disappears in August ; and, after a short ascent at the other side of the snow, found myself in the centre of this mighty cirque. It is a splendid thing ; and though those who look for the details spoken of by Mrs. E—— ; viz., ' the towers of Marboré, crowned with eternal snows, and all formed of the most beautiful marble, fluted like the columns of a Grecian temple,' will, I think, be disappointed, yet they cannot be so by the sublime effect of the whole. The cascade, like most cascades, seen at a distance, is not effective; in volume of water, I should say it is much inferior to that of the Lac d'Oo ; but the cirque or amphitheatre is of great magnificence. One may fancy it formed for a conclave of giants. A broad belt of snow, which never melts, fills up the bottom, and receives the eleven falls of different dimensions ; which, united, form the Gave. On the side of the great cascade, the rock rises perpendicularly to a great height, terminated by a jagged outline. The cirque, properly so called, where my giants used to assemble, consists of three

prodigious rows of seats: behind them, a more level space, where is a glacier and deep eternal snow; beyond it, two other rows of seats; then a mighty wall, above it, a canopy of snow, and the great heights of Marboré crown the whole. I suppose the perpendicular wall gave Mrs. E—— the impression she describes. There is in it a variety of colour, which arises probably more from the stains of snow as it melts above, than from the colour of the marble itself; and these stains may have given rise to the idea of columnar formation,—at least, it approached nearer to it than anything else I saw.

"I ascended the side a little, opposite to the fall, and attempted a sketch, but I was too near to produce any effect. Spanish shepherds rent these scanty pastures in the autumn, paying about five or six sous a-head for their sheep. Barren as they appear, they are invaluable to them, when the pasturage on the southern side of the mountains is burnt up. I remained nearly an hour, which soon passes over; so absorbed is the mind in such a scene. And yet—what habit will do!—my guide sat near me, fast asleep! As we descended, he pointed out the rock which affords a poor protection to the Spanish shepherds during

their visit here. Some fir branches formed their bed, and some ashes at the other end shewed where their fire had been. They are sure to find their lodgings unoccupied on their return. He also shewed me the mountain, which, according to one plan, must be tunnelled should a carriage road be made in this direction to Spain. Such a thing is said to be in contemplation. Another line, through the Valley of Heas, is said to be more practicable.

"As we approached the cirque, I saw, on my right, some mules working up the mountain, towards the Port de Gavarnie—a much easier passage than the Port de Venasque. I also saw, in the same direction, a glacier, bluish in colour and broken in form; the only one I have seen that exactly resembles those of Switzerland.

"In returning, forty minutes from the Plateau brought me to the Church of Gavarnie. It is small, old, damp, and uninteresting; no inscription, nor anything to connect it with the Templars but its dedication to St. John. However, there was a commandery here; and the twelve skulls arranged in a cupboard in the church, are said to have belonged to the last twelve knights, decapitated here on the sup-

pression of the order. All this may be very true but it requires a good supply of travellers' faith to believe it. I deposited with the curé a trifle towards the repair of his church, and we dashed off for the hotel, where I was soon busily employed making acquaintance with the landlady's fried bacon and eggs. The promised trout did not make their appearance; their place was supplied by a nondescript bone of mutton, which turned out to be better than it looked.

We remained an hour to allow the horses to feed, and then, at ten minutes after twelve, started on our return. We were the first off, and, as my guide said, returned "si rondement" there was no danger of being overtaken. We got home in two hours and twenty minutes, including stops. One of them was considerable, as I waited to attempt a sketch of "le Grand Chaos," as seen from above. The effect is perhaps still more striking than from below, and its gloomy neighbour looks still more *sinister*. I thus got home at half-past two, after a most successful expedition. The collecting clouds, as we returned, shewed us the advantages of an early start.

CHAPTER VI.

Disadvantages of a long residence in the mountain valleys—Barèges—Expedition to the Pic du Midi.

August 1st.—My maid was very ill yesterday, and just as W—— was going to get a doctor from St. Sauveur he most providentially met Dr. Taylor. The joy of seeing an English physician almost cured the poor girl, and relieved us from great anxiety. He so strongly recommends the waters of Cauterets for me, that we mean to try them. It was strange that I had just before almost made up my mind not to go there at all, but to let W—— make an excursion there to see the Lac de Gaube and return here the same evening, which might easily be done. So many people have abused the place to us that we expected to dislike it extremely.

We walked to St. Sauveur this morning, and,

feeling tired, I mounted a donkey, and went up to see a cascade on a considerable height above the town. The walk was very pretty, and the situation of the cascade fine ; but there is not much water, nor is it well worth seeing, though the little excursion there was very pleasant.

There was a violent thunder-storm in the night, and much rain has fallen. The mountains are covered with fresh snow,—even the lower ones are quite white. In consequence of the cold weather, and this being a fête day, a great number of brown capuchins and red capulets have made their appearance. The men here wear capuchins as well as the women ; and I have seen several venerable old men to-day in brown capuchins, carrying little children in their arms, whose baby heads were covered with red capulets.

These poor peasants are very good and affectionate people. I have remarked the peculiar tenderness shewn by the men to their children, and a great portion of their holiday enjoyment seems to be playing with their little ones. We have found, too, much kindness and civility among them—such as going out of their way to shew us ours, &c., and then refusing any remuneration. Goitres are very prevalent here ;

almost all the old women, and many old men, are afflicted with them.

Monday.—I do not think that, on a near approach to mountains, they have at all the same attractive, friendly look as at a distance; on the contrary, instead of being dear friends they are more like enemies. Marks of destruction, the ravages of torrents, the woful effects of avalanches, are met with at every step. The rocks seem ready to fall and crush us, and the rivers rush along with savage fury and deafening noise. No images of peace, scarcely of happiness, meet the eye.

Even the industry which maintains the little fields, upon the almost perpendicular sides of these awful valleys, does not produce a pleasing impression. It torments me to think how human beings are ever to get safe up and down such fearful heights. Then there is a look of toil and care about the peasantry, and the frequent goitres have a most melancholy appearance.

All around is ever changing; torrents root up the fruit of many years toilsome industry. Here we have a valley that was formerly a lake*—

* Luchon.

there, a lake where there was formerly a mountain; here a chaos of rocks—then the storms are so frequent, and the thunder sounds so much more awful than in the plains.

These dull reflections were partly the result of a drive to Baréges to-day. What a woful place it is! A dirty single street of miserable houses, and full of sick people! The drive to Baréges is a continued, and, in some places, a very steep ascent; but the road is so good along the side of the formidable Bastan, that, during the ascent, one is not aware of its rapidity. In two places it passed through the beds of mountain torrents, now dry; but shewing, from their breadth, how destructive they can be.

This road is a singular combination of civilized and savage life; its own excellence being, as to formation, as good as road can be. Its breadth, the fine trees, and productive meadows which mark its course, are proofs of high civilization. Its great elevation, the impetuous river, almost a continued waterfall, and the rocky heights around, shew what this scene must originally have been.

Baréges, as a séjour d'agrement, does not deserve such an approach. It is a triste and me-

lancholy place ; except for health, I cannot conceive how any one could wish to remain in it for an hour. It consists principally of a long, narrow street of inferior-looking houses. In no part of the Pyrenees have I seen disease so prominent as here—it meets one at every step. A sound resident must feel himself quite uncomfortable, as something distinct from the society of the place. It is also a military hospital; the soldiers' bath is under ground, where we were told they bathe " six à la fois." What a delightful recreation ! The hospital is near the baths, where it narrows the street, and contributes not a little to the gloom of the town.

We had provided ourselves with some additional five-franc pieces, as we wished to make some purchases ; but I might have left them at home, the shops, or perhaps more properly speaking, booths, held out no temptation.

It is singular, that in this place, frequented as it is, and at this moment with hardly a room unoccupied, there is not a regular bookseller's shop. The " Salon Litteraire" is at a grocer's, and his supply is very scanty. I asked for a number of the Album des Pyrénées, and was referred to the apothecary, who had a few books

arranged on one of his shelves. I do not think that either here or at St. Sauveur, such a thing as a map is to be had; indeed, the dearth of *mental* food throughout the Pyrenees is very striking, not excepting even Bagnères de Bigorre. I took a sketch from above the bridge, at the eastern extremity of the town.

The redeeming circumstance of Baréges is the walk in the wood which overhangs the town; the paths through it are kept in good order, and command fine points of view down the valley. We saw but few people moving about, and almost all were invalids; they stared at us, as much as to say—"What business have you here?—where are your crutches?" In returning, we were able to judge of the great height we had attained. The drag was put on as we started, and not taken off until we reached our own door, at Luz. We came very gently, and yet were only three-quarters of an hour en route.

Wednesday, August 4th.—Rome or Madrid—Italy or Spain?—are the weighty questions which now occupy our thoughts. I was most anxious for the Spanish plan. But this last week's suffering from head-ache and many other ail-

ments, has much shaken my courage, and I begin to turn towards the easy and beaten track of Italy with longing eyes. I see its pleasant towns, and comfortable inns, with the delightful security of past experience.

The remembrance of our former tour has all the balmy and soothing dimness of a glad dream, for it was a long time ago, and the eventful years which have passed since then have swept from my mind the recollection of all those little minor annoyances that must be our lot everywhere, and I remember only the pleasure it afforded. I had then lost but few of the dear friends, whose deaths seem, one by one, to have developed, by suffering, all the stronger portions of my disposition. I did not think or feel half so deeply then as I do now. Beautiful or striking objects did not make such a vivid impression; but I was in a careless, peaceful frame of mind, and the statues, pictures, and ruins I then beheld, left with me, as I said before, all the fascinating indistinctness of a beautiful dream, and seem to promise repose—that great attraction for a sick body—as well as enjoyment.

Here I am, unable to do anything: was so

fatigued with a little donkey-ride of three hours I took yesterday to the bridge of Scias, that I can hardly stand to-day, and was very ill all the evening. It was a beautiful excursion, however, to that Pont de Scias—the view of the waterfall from the curious double bridge very fine.

W—— went up to the Pic du Midi early this morning, and, to my great surprise, returned from his long expedition at two o'clock. I here insert his account of it:—

"I started for the Pic at half-past five, and then the weather promised everything that was favourable for the expedition, but did not turn out quite what I could have wished. It was only tolerably fine when I reached the top. In less than an hour we reached Baréges, and waited for a few minutes to purchase corn for the horses, to be given on the Pic, and then we continued our route. Immediately on leaving the town we ascended a steep hill, still keeping the left bank of the Bastan; a new road is now being made nearer the river, to avoid this ascent. After crossing a mountain-torrent of some consequence, we kept along the side of another height, which forms one boundary of the valley

of the Tourmalet; on the opposite hill is some neatly-cultivated ground, and several houses—it is called Tourmabon, and is a summer establishment of one of the villages near Luz.

"We now descended to a plain, close to the river, having a wood of beech on our right, called by my guide 'un forêt royale,' which is most carefully guarded. We then crossed the Bastan, at the entrance of the wild valley of Lieuz, separated by a rocky boundary from that of Escabons, which is said to be very wild also. In it is a lake, where are good trout, and which is rented by some one at Baréges for two hundred and fifty francs a-year; it is one of the sources of the Bastan.

"We continued to ascend the valley of Tourmalet, having two fine points on the right, the Picquette, and the Pic d'Estade, which is very striking; the glacier of Neouvielle came gradually into view; we had the Tourmalet in front, and behind us a noble view of the Canmille, its Pic and the Barbe de Bouc becoming every moment more important. We were still on the road from Baréges to Bagnères de Bigorre, by the Tourmalet: it is good, selon M. le Guide.

"We now left the road, to traverse a steep pasture, in which we found the rude hut of a shepherd. It grows a great profusion of lilies, now out of bloom. A steep and rather rocky ascent introduced us to wilder scenery, and the summit of the Pic du Midi came into sight, but the wind came from the north, and passing clouds too plainly shewed a change of weather. A bed of snow which we crossed proved that we had already attained a great height, and the Picquette and Pic d'Estade began to sink into comparative insignificance, as the Neouvielle and its neighbours came more into sight.

"In about three hours and a quarter, we reached the height which overlooks the Lac d'Oncet. Nothing can exceed the wildness of this lake and its situation: it is still, to a considerable extent, frozen, as a large part is occupied by a black, half-dissolved glacier. Inglis says this lake is the highest, or one of the highest, in Europe, and gives it an altitude of nearly 8000 feet above the level of the sea. The water is too cold for fish; it lies in the midst of rocky heights, a picture of quiet desolation, strongly contrasting in character with the furious Bastan, which issues from it. Near the bank, I

saw a botanist, who has been for some time here pursuing his studies. My guide spoke of the good fortune of a friend of his, who is guide to this gentleman: he receives for himself and two horses, twelve francs a-day and their food.

"The path is narrow, but well made, which winds round one boundary of the lake, to reach the Brêche de Bagnères de Bigorre. As we advanced two formidable-looking shepherd's dogs seemed inclined to oppose our progress; but it came to nothing but barking, and a fine deep growl; they were of the large, white breed, said to be very fierce in defence of their flocks. The summit of the Pic du Midi is 1860 feet above the lake, and is approached by a path which is steep, but so well made, as to make riding practicable even to the top. It is, however, hard work for horses; so, about a quarter of the way up, we dismounted. The path, as I have already said, is so good as not to be at all dangerous; but it is necessarily narrow and unprotected, and there was something appalling in the thought that a false step might send one toppling over many hundred feet, into that cold, dull lake below.

"The view, as we ascended, of the chain of the Pyrenees was magnificent; luckily, the mist,

which threatened disastrously as to the view of the plain, left the part most interesting to me, the mountains, perfectly clear. It extends far away along the eastern chain; nearer to me I recognised old acquaintances in the Maledetta, and its companions, the Carabolus, Glacier de la Vache, and the heights about Lac d'Oo. Immediately in front, the striking feature is the Neouveille (which means 'Old Snow,' shewing its large glacier, and, from its position, nearly obstructs the view of Mont Perdu—then the Marboré's snowy plain, for so it now appeared with its rocky wall, divided by the Brêche. The Tour de la Fausse Brêche, appeared on a level with me. The Vignemale was *almost* a new acquaintance, for from the Bergons, only a small portion is visible. The great heights of the Mercadan, displaying almost a greater extent of snow than any of the range, were quite new to me.

"We had now lost sight of the lake, as we advanced nearer the summit, and, having crossed a bed of snow, reached a more open spot, just at the foot of the great height. Here was some pasture, so we unbridled our horses, and having placed their corn before them, left them to themselves. The air had become cold,

and a high wind had arisen, driving the mist rapidly before it, and I had the mortification to see the top, partially covered; over a shoulder of the mountain, I caught a glimpse of the plain below.

"On we toiled, and when we reached the top nothing was to be seen; even the mountains were all covered. A kind of tower, with a recess inside, has been erected on the top. I took shelter there, and we held a council of war as to what was to be done. My guide, influenced, I dare say, by the cold wind and want of breakfast, said there was no hope of amendment, and I thought myself destined to a thick mist for the remainder of the day; but I was delightfully disappointed, for, soon after quitting the top, the mist to the south completely rolled away, and I had the mountains again in all their splendour, increased in effect as the shadows of the clouds passed over them. This gave me hopes, and I fortunately waited, and, lying down on a shelving rock immediately over the plain, I had the satisfaction to see the mist lifted up like a curtain, and the chequered plain below became visible, overhung by scattered clouds, but itself in bright sunshine.

"Tarbes lay immediately before me. The trees above Bagnères de Bigorre looked close at hand; and I saw below, as on a map, the different roads which we had travelled over. I remained nearly half an hour on this spot, in the hope that the mist, which still hung upon the summit, would roll away, but it did not. However, I had a noble view, and an excellent idea of how splendid it must be on a perfectly clear day.

"The position of the Pic du Midi is superior to that of any of the great heights I have visited, Mount Ætna excepted. Placed in front of the chain, it commands the Pyrenees to a great extent, and rising to so great a height abruptly from the plain, has an extent of view perhaps unparalleled. How I rejoiced that I had not yielded to my guide's advice, and immediately come down! I saw two travellers below me turn back after they had reached the snow. I suppose that appearances with them were, at the moment, unfavourable. They descended by the Brêche to Bagnères de Bigorre. By it there is a way practicable for horses, but inferior to that by the Tourmalet. As we descended, I had an opportunity of judging more justly of the height we had attained.

"When over the lake, well might I have said—

'How dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes below!'

I walked as far as the shepherd's cottage, and met a party ascending. By the time they got up, a heavy cloud had, I fear, taken permanent possession of the summit. I did not hold out much hope to them. We now soon reached the Bigorre road, and moved rapidly downwards. When on the side of the mountain above Baréges, I saw, from its position, how liable it must be to suffer from avalanches. It lies in the gorge which terminates this narrow valley, where the snow must accumulate immensely, and in which are the Bastan and two or three other torrents 'as wicked as itself,' to direct this accumulation against the town. In consequence, that part where the shops are, is entirely removed after the season, and only a few people remain in charge of the deserted houses.

"The new bath below the town is in a very perilous situation, and has already narrowly escaped destruction from a torrent, which every winter destroys the road, as it hurries to join the Bastan. The day turned out very fine, and as we did not stop at Baréges, I reached home a few minutes before two; thus

doing the entire in eight hours and twenty minutes. I was told it would have occupied ten hours. I had a most interesting expedition, which I would not have lost on any account."

CHAPTER VII.

Ride to Cauterets—Advantages of a narrow street, and of having nothing to do—Romance of real life—Comparison between French and English agreeableness.

Cauterets, Saturday, August 8th.—This place is more of a town than any of the baths we have seen except Bagnères de Bigorre. More shops—more bustle and gaiety. Our rooms look into a street—opposite houses almost shut out the view of the mountains, and hide from us the narrowness of the valley; yet this is narrower than any we have seen, and the mountains rise more abruptly on all sides; so that I am almost glad to have houses to break the prospect; and we have cheerful-looking neighbours—Parisian belles making their toilette at one window—in an adjoining room morning visits going on, at others, parties probably arranging for to-

morrow; and all this so near, that I can almost *see* what they are talking about.

To look upon a variety of little interiors of this kind is very amusing. To-night, when the rooms were lighted up, the little scenes I saw put me in mind of well-acted comedies.

One old gentleman seemed particularly anxious to read the newspaper, while a young fair girl, with malicious blue eyes, was equally determined he should not. Every time he had adjusted his spectacles, and got the paper comfortably in the right place, she said something to him, exciting his attention to the evidently *sotto voce* conversation of a handsome man and a beautiful young woman who sat in the next window.

She was a dark-eyed beauty, slightly resembling the young girl, and the likeness of both to the old gentleman shewed that he had a father's right to be interested about the little flirtation which was going on in the moon-lit window. But the dark girl did not much approve of her younger sister's espieglerie, still less did her lover. The old gentleman was gradually induced to join in their conversation; then the young girl, seeing the mischief she had done by the sorrowful looks of her sister, en-

deavoured, as I thought, to remedy matters. She placed herself between them and the lights which burnt on the table where the old man sat, while she shewed him some prints or drawings. But this would not do, and the offer of his ponderous snuff-box, which she fetched, was equally inefficacious. He threw down his newspaper with a determined air. Whether he did so because he disapproved of the young man's suit, I cannot say, but he seemed to say something in a loud voice; for an old lady who had been comfortably dozing all the time, in a red velvet fauteuil, suddenly woke up, and did not appear to be in a very good humour. A good deal of bowing and talking ensued, and soon afterwards the young man took his leave.

The dark girl remained in the same place at the open window, her slender throat extended as she looked wistfully for a few minutes down the street, but it was evident that her fine eyes were not gratified by meeting with the object they sought, for I thought a tear stood glistening under their dark lashes. The young sister came near, playfully took her hand, and whispered some smiling words in her ear. She pointed towards the old pair, who now sat in earnest con-

versation near the table with the lights. This sight, however, did not seem to console the dark beauty; she rather pettishly withdrew her hand from her sister, and leaned out of the window. The sunny face of the fair girl now became clouded; she mused for a few minutes, alternately looking at her pensive sister and the old pair, who seemed to be disputing about something.

At last she seemed to form a sudden resolution, and, with that winning gracefulness which the half-spoiled youngest child of old parents frequently possesses, she boldly interrupted their conversation, sat down on the old gentleman's knee, and, in spite of his endeavours to get rid of her, and without minding the angry looks of her mother, began to stroke his face.

And thus the kind-hearted, thoughtless girl endeavoured to repair the mischief she felt guilty of having done to her sister by interrupting perhaps the first tête-à-tête she had ever had with the young gentleman; and soon she so far succeeded, that the mother went up to the window, and spoke with a kinder air to the sorrowing girl.

They had a long and earnest talk together, the sight of which interested me much; for I am

sure the old lady's words were full of wisdom, and the young girl gradually felt the force of her arguments, though I rather fancy they were not quite in favour of her wishes. In the mean time, my little blue-eyed friend was talking most earnestly to the old man. With the resolute pettishness of a spoiled child, she would listen to none of his sage arguments. She kissed his broad forehead, playfully smoothing the frowns that gathered there; and at last, finding her little reasoning of no use, she burst into tears, and, clasping her hands together, knelt down at his feet. At this interesting moment, a servant provokingly came in to close the outer shutters. The little girl jumped up and walked demurely across the room, the mother and daughter withdrew from the window, and all the scene was closed from my view.

I had looked upon a common little scene—one of frequent occurrence—but it is impossible thus to view the workings of different characters, to see thus plainly the turning-point that makes or mars the happiness of two human beings, without feeling a deep interest in their fate. What sage reasons the parents may have for objecting to the lover's suit, I cannot tell. He may be

poor, and his independent, majestic air makes me imagine he is a Spaniard—an exile, perhaps, who has lost everything in the cause of Don Carlos; but, to judge by appearance, he is quite worthy of the beautiful girl's affection. Well, perhaps to-morrow's inspection may enable me to form a better judgment.

And now let us return to Cauterets itself, and how we came here, and, more important still to me, how I got well enough to come, on horseback, too, and the whole way in a broiling sunshine.

I believe it was the fear of being persuaded to try the waters of St. Sauveur, which the French physician so much wanted me to do; and the fear of their disagreeing, and my being laid up in a place where, during the ten days of our stay, I had never been well enough to make any excursion, or do scarcely anything. These apprehensions gave me a panic, and endued me with energy to get up at six o'clock this morning, and persuade W—— to let us start. No horses could be found for the carriage; but as I always meant to ride, in order to enjoy more fully the fine scenery of the mountain passes, a steed and guide were soon found. We started soon after

eight, W—— on foot, leaving the servants and carriage to follow, whenever horses could be found.

After leaving Pierrefitte, it became intensely hot. Quite overpowered, we longed to turn off the road, and rest under the shade of those fine trees which clothe the sides of the mountains, even to their highest summits. But we were afraid of not getting rooms, as we have heard alarming accounts of the fulness of Cauterets, and the extreme difficulty of finding any sort of accommodation. We hurried on, therefore, and arrived about one o'clock. First went to the Hôtel de l'Europe, having been cautioned by many people against the Hotel de France. No rooms were to be found; but a civil, active waiter made us come in to rest while he went out to see what apartments could be had. It was the public table-d'hôte room where we waited, and filled with the odour of departed breakfasts—French ones, I mean; not the sweet-smelling tea, coffee, and delicious hot rolls of an English morning's meal, but strongly tinctured with garlic, fried bacon, omelettes, &c., the original sweetness of which a very hot day does not improve. But any shade was delightful, after the complete broiling we had experienced;

and we were almost asleep on our chairs when interrupted by the smiling waiter, whose broad face looked full of success.

He had discovered, he said, just the thing we wanted—the only thing in all Cauterets. It was so lucky to find it just disengaged! Numberless families were waiting for rooms, and would have given anything to have known of these. And so clean, too, and only à deux pas de l'hôtel!—and then the landlady—une bonne femme; in short, all was perfection; so we rubbed our eyes, tried to feel equally pleased and hopeful, and accompanied our zealous friend to view the rooms.

They were not quite what we should have chosen, had the whole town been at our command; W—— being obliged to dress in our sitting room, the maid to sleep in a darkish closet, and the man in another house; but, considering all difficulties, we were pretty well satisfied, particularly with the price, which is less than we have paid anywhere (seven francs), and the woman very civil—in short, we are tolerably comfortable; our salon looks on the street, and bed-room into a small garden and court behind.

The noise is, however, tremendous. Such a

tapage has been going on, since our arrival, in preparation for the fête which is to take place to-morrow—drums beating, to announce the arrival of travelling merchants, who are pouring in from all parts of the country, and who advertise and puff their goods by beat of drum; then, the expected fête seems to have imparted additional vigour to that curse of the Pyrenees, the cracking of whips; trumpeters and German singers are also here. We cannot, indeed, quarrel with the latter, for they sing some very pretty Tyrolese airs, which have a beautiful effect among mountain scenery—a gratification rather unusual in the Pyrenees.

The French are not, I think, a musical people: they have no love for music; an observation which might, until lately, have been justly made as to England; but I rejoice to find that with us a taste for music is rapidly advancing.

But to return to this day's history. After installing ourselves in our lodging, and drinking some delicious eau sucré à la fleure d'orange, sent by the civil waiter, W—— went to take a bath, and, as I felt much rested, I started to explore the town. Its aspect pleased me, and that of the various shady walks which diverge through

forests, upwards, in all directions; and the different baths, nestled in little, rural nooks among the rocks and trees. The shops and lodging-houses, too, have all a cheerful and comfortable look.

To the right, a mountain—the Gambas, I believe—overhangs Cauterets. It seems actually to project over part of the town, and yet its sides are quite covered with wood, and it has a look of greater repose than any Pyrenean mountain I have yet seen, and is less cut up by fearful water-courses. How the large trees find root, and remain apparently suspended in mid-air, I cannot imagine. The other mountains are near, but not so fearfully steep and overhanging as that dark, frowning Gambas.

After dinner, we walked by the river on the road to the Pont d'Espagne and Lac de Gaube. We saw a fine waterfall at the end of the valley, rushing down into the river; and watched the last sun-beams on the mountain-tops. The sky was more intensely blue than I ever remember to have seen it, and a few light clouds, which here and there hovered over the mountains, were a bright, lovely pink. The forest-clad heights near us, and the more distant snow-covered

peaks, assumed beautiful hues—the combination of the two prominent colours in the sky. The tints were very peculiar, and we never remarked a sky which preserved its decided pink and blue so long.

At last, these bright colours almost suddenly vanished—all became pale, till the moon began to tinge, with its warm southern light, the higher summits, and then a sort of half-daylight returned, even to the valley.

Half-past ten o'clock, and the carriage not yet arrived. We have no books or anything with us, which affords me time to trace our opposite neighbours' little histories, and to record them on a thin, ghost-like sheet of paper, with the remains of a miserable pen lent me by our landlady. We are beginning to be uneasy about the servants and carriage. The road, however, is good all the way, and the high and narrow passes between Pierrefitte and this place are not so terrific as those between it and Luz. Indeed, there is nothing in either to alarm a person whose nerves and health are not in a troubled state.

Monday, August 8th.—The carriage came, however, just as we had made up our minds to do

without the comforts it contained, so I doubly enjoyed them. After a long, good sleep, awoke much refreshed, and glad to find myself in a new place.

I have been amused this morning by seeing more of home-life in the opposite house, and have discovered a jealous wife and two rival beauties, but I have looked in vain for the rejected suitor. The dark girl seems unhappy, though resigned; the blue-eyed sister looks still pettish, I fear, as if her pride were more hurt at not having been able to carry her point than at her sister's grief; and thus she suffers more from her own wayward disposition than her innocent sister does at her own disappointment.

The lover does not appear—has he been formally rejected by the parents? or is he piqued by their behaviour on Saturday night? or has he been refused by the beautiful girl herself? I cannot make out the real state of the case, though I feel most curious to know. She seems to have such a well-regulated mind—that dark girl!—and has certainly not been spoilt, as I much fear her pretty little sister will be.

We have seen no English here. All the little scenes I view in the opposite interiors are enacted

by French people, I think, of the best classes. The women very lady-like, and their manners differ in nothing from those of the best society in England. There is the same quiet air—the same half-indifference—in fact, the same natural manners, totally devoid of any affectation—such as really well-bred English women now possess. There is no show of exaggerated feeling—no appearance of greater sensitiveness and energy than they really possess, which vulgar people generally assume, and which we are apt to attribute to the French. Yet, though the higher classes of each country resemble each other much, I must confess that in general the French are much more agreeable in conversation.

Miss Sedgwick says, in her interesting "Letters from Abroad," that "there is something in the Anglo-Saxon race essentially adverse to the spirit and grace of society—that our conversation may be, indeed, 'the feast of wit,' but it is not 'the flow and mingling of soul.'"

This is very true, and particularly so among the clever set of wits with whom celebrated strangers are most likely to become acquainted on their arrival in England. There is, indeed, but little flow of soul, but there is great combat

of wit; and I cannot help thinking that some reform is wanting in the tone and fashion of conversation among English people. We are still extremely reserved, however forward or witty we may be; and this is to be regretted, for our education, particularly that of English women, is such, that if some could throw off the restraint which shuts up their ideas, and if others could get rid of the pretension to wit and the wish to shine in conversation that almost extinguishes a lofty train of thought, we should then be more agreeable than people of most other countries. We meet plenty of persons in society who make us laugh, but very few who make us think. Most of our great wits, too, are professed talkers, and though it is extremely amusing to hear them, yet, as they create a certain degree of awe, there is very little conversation when they are present.

On the other hand, some are of opinion that society should be a recreation—that most persons would rather laugh than think—and that there is more real enjoyment in hearing one or two persons who take all the trouble of conversation on themselves, than in any general interchange of

thought. This is the case more particularly in England, because we are still the most reserved people in the world. And yet, where so much is sacrificed to society, is it not strange that we do not endeavour to make conversation more "the flow of the soul?" There is a strong passion in England for society; old country-houses are deserted, and watering-places created, because we cannot be satisfied, as our forefathers were, with a life of comparative retirement. It is wonderful how much is sacrificed to this passion, by persons, too, who do not appear, after all, really to enjoy society—for how can there be enjoyment where there is constraint?

August the 9th.— A rainy day prevents our intended expedition to the Lac de Gaube, and the clouds look so low and heavy as to threaten us with a continuance of wet weather. We find our rooms very comfortable; and the opposite houses, with their interesting interiors, are a great resource in this gloomy day. We like this place (as yet) much better than we expected. Many friends had abused it, saying the country was less picturesque, the town dirty, houses and fare bad and dear, &c. We

find all the reverse; and I think, too, the situation is more picturesque than any we have yet seen, and there appears to be a much greater variety of those pretty *near* walks, which are of such value to an invalid.

In short, I am most agreeably surprised in the place, and should enjoy it extremely, if I had not got a sort of mountain surfeit. I long to be in a plain again, and wonder how I could ever have quarrelled with a wide open country, a fine low, distant horizon, and boundless expanse of sky!

Some of the few English I have met in these beautiful regions congratulated themselves that it has not yet become the fashion for English people to travel here. I often think how selfish it is to regret meeting our countrymen touring in all directions. Ought we not rather to rejoice that others find enjoyment in the same manner as ourselves? And though many may be vulgar, and appear not to appreciate all the beauty they see, yet we may trust that to behold loveliness has an exalting effect on the mind in every grade of society.

CHAPTER VIII.

Pont d'Espagne—Lac de Gaube—End of the Romance of Real Life—Mont Né—Tremendous thunder-storm.

Tuesday, 10.—*The Lac de Gaube.*—We had a delicious day for our excursion. We started at half-past nine ; I in a chaise à porteurs with four men, and W—— and the guide on foot. The cascades we passed near are the finest I have seen in the Pyrenees, and some of the scenery the most picturesque. The pines, which are here mingled with other fine trees, add their aromatic fragrance to the thousand forest perfumes, which are always delicious, and their dark hue gives more vigour to the colouring. The road runs by the side of the torrent as far as the Pont d'Espagne, and it rushes down in a succession of cascades, as if on purpose to produce beautiful pictures. The whole scene had

to-day an air of fête. The spray produced numerous rainbows in all directions, sometimes peeping up through the trees, shewing where a fall more gigantic than the rest was hid beneath; and sometimes these beautiful bows ran half across the path, when I had the childish delight of passing through their lovely tints.

The Pont d'Espagne is thrown across the deep and narrow passage in the rock through which the united Gaves—the Marcadan and that from the Lac de Gaube—flow. A hut, where refreshments may be had, is built on the rock above this passage. Beyond it, we crossed the Gave de Marcadan by the Pont de Joseph, and then came in sight of the finest of the falls; indeed, one of the grandest and most curious spectacles I ever saw.

Three impetuous torrents here unite: the Gave du Lac de Gaube comes tumbling straight down from a great height immediately in front of us; another descends from as great a height a little to the right, but runs more playfully round the trees and rocks, forming a graceful bend before it meets the Gave de Gaube; and then they both rush down the perpendicular steep, close under the rock where we stood, and

are almost lost together in the narrow and profound abyss.

Turning a little to the left, but without quitting the rock, we looked towards a spot whence a thundering roar proceeded, and there we saw the meeting of those united torrents with the furious Marcadan. It is at a fearful depth below; and they clash with such force against each other as to send the spray high into the air, and the whole neighbourhood vibrates with the shock. Their rocky bed then becomes so narrow, that one cannot imagine how the three impetuous torrents can be compressed into such a narrow cleft; and the eye runs on with much curiosity to watch their exit and further progress, in the distant valley below.

All this scene is wild, and yet ornamented; the trees grow very fantastically, springing straight from the sides of the precipitous rocks which form the passage, over whose extremity the Pont d'Espagne is thrown.

The Valley de Geret, which we had ascended from Cauterets, here divides into two branches; that on the right is the Valley de Marcadan, which leads into Spain by the Baths of Penticosa. The "Port" is about five hours from this spot, and is described as a good road on the

French side, but has a very rapid descent on that of Spain.

We proceeded by the other branch, which leads to the Lac de Gaube, and passed through more sylvan and enchanting scenery.

"Here dwelt that spell upon the mountain's brow,
Which calls to life the bosom's generous glow;
Here smiled that spirit on the mirror-lake,
From which our feelings holy calmness take;
And breeze, and bloom, and change of night and day,
Held commune with the soul's more noble part,
And fain would lead it, on its destined way,
All dignified the mind, all calm and good the heart." V.

After all the splendid scenery one meets on the road, the Lac de Gaube itself is rather disappointing; it is like passing through a gigantic vestibule and staircase into a common-sized room.

The Vignemale shewed itself in great distinctness before us; but its form is not fine, nor its apparent height, as seen from the lake, great. The glacier is as yet covered with snow. This mountain is, I think, the third in height of the Pyrenees, being 10,086 feet, yielding only to the Maledetta and Mont Perdu. The lake is, in every respect, inferior to Lac d'Oo, being more melancholy, but not nearly so sublime. The

smooth surface of the water was only broken by the single boat, which most sadly resembles in form and hue a floating coffin.

A low rock, in front of the little inn, projects into the lake, and on it has been placed a monument to the unfortunate pair who were lost in the lake, having imprudently gone in the little boat without the boatman. The stone is surrounded by an iron rail. The inscription on the land side is in French, and nearly effaced; we had some difficulty to decipher it. We heard that some person from Bordeaux was to be at the lake that very day, to restore the inscription. It is as follows :—

" A la memoire de
William Henry Pattison, Ecuyer,
Avocat de Lincoln's Inn, Londres,
et de Sarah Frances, son épouse,
Agés un de 31 ans, l'autre 20.
Mariés depuis un mois seulement,
un accident affreux les enleva à
leurs parens et à leurs amis inconsolables.
Ils furent engloutis dans le lac,
le 20 Sep., 1832.
Leurs restes, transportés en
Angleterre, reposent à Witham,
dans le conté d'Essex."

The lady was carried in a " chaise à porteurs," and the porters saw from the bank the occur-

rence of the accident without being able to afford any assistance. The gentleman, it appears, either from balancing imprudently, or from some other cause, fell out of the boat; the screams of the unfortunate lady were heard, and soon after, whether in an attempt to save him, or in despair at seeing him sink, she fell from the boat also. Her body, partly supported by her dress, was found the same day; his, not for nineteen days after. There is, on the stone facing the lake, an English inscription, but it escaped our notice. Milnes has well described this sad occurrence, in a little poem called, "Tragedy of the Lac de Gaube." The following detached passages record the event:—

"All gaily shone that little lake,
And nature, sternly fair,
Put on a sparkling countenance,
To greet that merry pair."

They ventured in the dangerous boat, and were so delighted with the scene, or their own glad feeling, that they stood up and danced, and rocked it to and fro in a childish glee, and then—

"One poise too much, he headlong fell,—
She, stretching out to save
A feeble arm, was borne adown
Within that glittering grave.

One moment, and the gush went forth,
Of music—mingled laughter,—
The struggling splash and deathly shriek
Were there the instant after."

Our expedition to-day was far more pleasant and much less fatiguing than any I have made. We were not above two hours going—exclusive of a stop of full half an hour at Pont d'Espagne—and not much more than an hour returning.

We walked this evening along some pretty paths in the direction of La Grange de la Reine Hortense. Great variety of scenery—some so sylvan as to appear like the deep recesses of a forest; then a rural bit suddenly occurs, with meadows and farm-houses, and all the pretty accompaniments of happy peasant life; which is again exchanged for a wild scene, where gigantic rocks are thrown about in all directions, and nature assumes its sternest aspect, and where the mountains tower above, and appear to stop all further progress; then one comes suddenly upon an eminence, which commands a more extended view of the varied scenes one has traversed. All this may be enjoyed here while walking on comfortable paths, without fearful torrents to cross or corkscrews and scalas to toil up,

as is so much the case in all the fine scenery about Luchon. Yes, the walks of Cauterets have to me a charm which none of the other baths possess—a sort of mysterious loveliness, which ever, after a walk or a ride, seems to leave the impression on the mind that one has not half enjoyed it, that there were a thousand little hidden paths, and nooks, and sunny glades diverging on all sides from the one followed, and each more lovely than the other. This, to my mind, is the perfection of scenery, for it excites the imagination, and makes one dream of even greater beauty than meets the eye.

The number of Spanish peasants, who come over the mountains here from Aragon, add very much to the enjoyment of the place. Their dress, particularly that of the men, is more picturesque than any I ever saw, though I thought none could be more beautiful than that of the Catalonians we saw in the Valley of Aran. These wear a high conical hat, with a broad brim, embroidered and tasseled; a coat of green velvet, with a richly-embroidered collar and breast, a waistcoat of brocaded satin, a red, or sometimes lilac, silk scarf tied round the waist, brown striped velvet culottes, garters

embroidered in gold, blue stockings, and sandals. Some have a large brown cloak hanging over one shoulder, which does not conceal their brilliant attire, and they hold it with such a graceful and regal air, that one cannot imagine those majestic and most independent-looking beings can be peasants.

We had some thoughts of crossing the Marcadan, and passing through the Valley of Marcadan, into Spain, to sleep at the Baths of Penticosa, which may be done in eight hours, and then another eight hours to Eaux Chaudes; but, on inquiry, we find the difficulties for me would be insurmountable. The passage into Spain, too, is reported to be much easier from the Eaux Bonnes or Chaudes, crossing over Gabas; so I have still some faint hope of being able to do it from thence.

Our opposite neighbours still continue to interest us. The last thing I see before I go to bed is a figure, muffled in a cloak, walking up and down before the door of the opposite house. His majestic step, and that peculiar tread which no other country has, shews him to be a Spaniard; and who can it be but the dark girl's lover? She, however, does not seem aware of this, for her shutters remain inexorably closed. She has still a dejected

PUBLIC
THOMAS N. A
RE

Sketched on Lady Lavertet and drawn on stone by [illegible]

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THE TOWN OF CAUTERETZ

Pyrénées

though resigned air, which seems to shew that she has either made up her mind to her fate, or thinks he is lost to her for ever.

Friday, 13*th*.—W—— went this morning to the summit of the Mont Né, and had a most propitious, though extremely hot day.

I went up to the Ballière, in a chaise à porteurs, to drink my glasses of water—began yesterday, but found the walk up there, in sunshine, much too fatiguing, so I was obliged to have recourse to the chair. Afterwards I took a sketch of the town, from the path leading to Mont Né.

I think this place is cooler, in very hot weather, than any we have been in, and much drier, too, for there is less cultivation, and therefore less irrigation about it. The forests of fine beech trees which clothe the mountains, come down close to the town, and, fortunately, leave but little room for fields, and consequent water-courses, and their accompanying formal rows of poplars, that I got so tired of at the other mountain baths. All this renders the air of Cauterets much more pure and invigorating, and it is the only place where it has felt and smelt as if it really belonged to mountains, though, in reality, I believe Cauterets is not higher, if so high, as Luz, or Luchon.

How lovely are these clear starlight nights! Last evening, we went up to the Bains de Cæsar, and rambled among the woods above, but the paths were so steep, I was soon obliged to come down as well as I could, wondering how those gigantic beeches, to whose roots I clung, were supported, and how they were kept from falling upon the town that lay at a fearful depth below.

I like to look down, from a height, upon a town, and see its busy stir, and think of all the world of turmoil, and thought, and feeling, which lies in a space that one can apparently cover with the hand. I recognised the roof of our little, humble dwelling, and its more consequential opposite neighbours, and thought of all the scenes I had witnessed there.

Saturday night.—W—— had a delicious day for his expedition to Mont Né. He has written an interesting account of it, which, however, I have not room to insert.

A Spaniard, from Saragossa, is going about the town, selling chocolate, and his dress is most gorgeous and beautiful. His high conical hat is richly decorated with gold and silver filigree buttons, and the same ornaments fasten his striped velvet dress at the knee; the waistcoat, of brocaded

satin, is profusely adorned with silver reals; his stockings are beautifully ornamented with open work, and the sandal, or Espartillo, fastened with purple velvet ribbon. He is a tall, handsome man, and carries about decorated baskets full of chocolate, in little coloured boxes, or in papers, tied with different coloured ribbon. W—— brought him to our rooms, that I might see his dress, and buy some of his very tempting-looking and most tastefully-arranged merchandise, which proved to be the best chocolate I ever tasted. It is a most useful thing to take with one in a long walk, or mountain expedition. I find that a little bit gives me much support, and sometimes quite revives me.

This evening we took a pretty walk—first along the high road to Pierrefitte, for about half a mile, and then turning to the left, crossed a wooden bridge over the river, and mounted a most inviting-looking path, along the rocky sides of one of those green knolls which project here and there into this valley, and add so much to its beauty.

At the summit we had a lovely view, both ways, of the stern mountains, and their magnificent mantle of forest; and immediately beneath

us, on the lower part of the same verdant knoll, was a little farm-house, with its fruit-garden, orchard, and beehives. The family was eating the evening meal before the door; the goats were quietly browsing; and the fowls, with their young broods, were receiving a portion of the children's supper; and the whole aspect of the place seemed to breathe love and peace.

Yet, crime and sorrow find their way even among scenes which appear fitted alone for innocence and joy. A short distance from that lovely spot, in the upper valley, near a high projecting rock we call the castle—a narrow defile of that steep mountain—was the scene, two years ago, of the fearful tragedy that W—— related in the account of his expedition to Mont Né. He said—

"In our course downwards from Mont Né, the narrow path lay alongside of a steep ravine, near it is a cross erected, at the spot which, just two years ago, was the scene of an atrocious event, shewing how highly the right of water is valued.

"The meadows of two farmers had a stream in common; some dispute arose between them as to its use. The weaker of the two, a man of

bad character, afraid to meet the other in fair fight, resolved to lie in wait for him. One evening, on this very path, as the other was returning from his grange, loaded with milk and wood, just at a turn of the path, he suddenly started out upon his victim, and having struck him with a hatchet, tumbled him down the ravine.

" It appears that the unfortunate man, having lost his load, contrived to struggle up to the road again, where his antagonist again attacked him, and completed his purpose ; the body was found the following day. The bloody hatchet was the chief witness against the murderer. The evidence being only circumstantial, he was condemned to the gallies, where he soon afterwards died. ' They have a way there,' said Baran, ' of getting rid, in a very short time, of those they wish to get rid of.' "

How it pains one to think of crime, and consequent misery, when contemplating such a scene as we witnessed from that beautiful spot! The air was so balmy, the smell of wild flowers and forest trees so delicious, the feel of mere existence in such a place—so delightful, that it was hard to imagine that any evil pas-

sions could trouble those who habitually dwelt there.

Yet I felt it was well to know that such was the case, for some scenes are so beautiful—and we have, even in this world, some moments of bliss—so perfect, and, if I may venture to say it, so devoid of all bad feeling, that we seem journeying towards heaven on a path of roses. In these moments, we sometimes forget our innate corruption, and the dire necessity there is that death and suffering should fit us for an immortality, to which alone we are heirs by the cruel and ignominious crucifixion of our Lord. Thus, every event in this evil world has some good end, and the fearful crime committed by that unfortunate man serves as a warning to lower our pride, and make us remember that no heavenly scenery — no solitary and peaceful-looking abode—can guard our evil hearts from the temptations of sin.

We lingered till the short twilight was fading away, and then hurried down, for there was no moon, and the sky was fast overspreading with dark clouds. Long before we reached home, a storm came on, and the black darkness was now and then broken by flashes of lightning so vivid

that every mountain peak was brilliantly illuminated, and the rushing torrent looked, for the moment, like a stream of fire; and those green knolls, which an hour before were tinged with the calm hues of soft declining day, now stood out like grey spectres, frowning over the valley, or shone with a lurid and fearful glare. The forest trees, which before were motionless, now rocked fearfully, their giant branches swung to and fro, as if, suddenly possessed by some evil spirit, they were savagely exulting over the work of destruction. The thunder crashed, and echoed from mountain to mountain; rain fell in torrents, and the swollen river, and its many tributary waterfalls, redoubled their roar. The whole valley seemed suddenly changed from heaven to hell—a practical illustration, thought I, of the fearful instability of all peace and joy here below.

"A sign was on creation. You beheld
All things encolour'd in a sulph'rous hue,
As day were sick with fear. The haggard clouds
O'erhung the utter lifelessness of air;
The top boughs of the forest, all aghast,
Stared in the face of Heav'n; the deep-mouth'd wind,
That hath a voice to bay the armed sea,
Fled with a low cry like a beaten hound;

And only that askance the shadows flew
Some open-beaked birds in wilderment,
Naught stirr'd abroad. All dumb did Nature seem,
In expectation of the coming storm.

" It came in power. You soon might hear afar
The footsteps of the martial thunder sound
Over the mountain battlements: the sky
Being deep stained with hues fantastical,
Red like to blood, and yellow like to fire;
And black like plumes at funerals; overhead
You might behold the lightning faintly gleam
Amid the clouds which thrill and gape aside,
And straight again shut up their solemn jaws,
As if to interpose between Heaven's wrath
And Earth's despair. Interposition brief!
Darkness is gathering out her mighty pall
Above us, and the pent-up rain is loosed,
Down trampling in its fierce delirium."

We were extremely pleased when we caught a glimpse of the lamps in the town, almost expecting to find it swept away by the furious elements, or buried under some of those gigantic rocks which overhang it. Still more delighted were we to return to our rooms, and, closing all the outer shutters, sat down to our quiet table, and candles, whose steady light looked so pleasantly tranquil and comfortable, after all the fitful glare and turmoil we had witnessed in our walk.

We are preparing to start to-morrow, and I am quite pleased to feel sorry at the idea of leaving this place. Departure is very seldom, with me, a subject of regret. It is but too often my happiest moment, and this is to me a cause of regret and reproach, for I fancy it shews such an extremely unamiable and unkindly disposition; and yet, perhaps it may be thus accounted for—that hope being one of my strongest feelings, and ill health often preventing my enjoyment of the present moment, I always look forward with delight to an expectation of happiness from any change. When I am quite well, and free from all bodily suffering, I enjoy such happiness—such a vivid conviction of the goodness of God, and confidence in ultimate and eternal bliss, that it seems beyond the nature of things—beyond what was intended, in this probationary state, and, therefore, that I must suffer, in order to fulfil the law of our being. During these short intervals of freedom from pain, I am in such high spirits, that, waking or sleeping, my enjoyment is perfect. I smile in my sleep, and often wake up in a fit of laughter. When in health, I can, indeed—

"Look through earth's gladness to the gladder skies;"

And feel like—

> "A bird, that resting in a midway land,
> Loves that, but better loves the home beyond."

We wish to see the Valley of Azun, which extends from Argeles, in a westerly direction, towards the mountains, near the Eaux Bonnes. There is a horse-road over them to that place, and we had some intention of trying it, but we have heard such a variety of accounts about the length and difficulties of the expedition, that we were much puzzled. The guide here maintains it is about nine hours' work on horseback, and part of the road so steep, on the other side, that one must dismount. This sounds too much for me, which I regret, as it would have saved us a journey of eleven miriametres, all the way round by Pau.

We now think of a drive in the carriage to Pierrefitte, having horses, and Baran, the guide, to meet us there; then go up the Vallée d'Azun, so far as Arens and the Chapelle de Pouy, and join the carriage at Argeles, to take us to sleep at Lourdes. We had afterwards a conference with Baran, to put things provisionally en train.

CHAPTER IX.

Ride by St. Savin to the Valley d'Azun—Anzizans—Arens—Pouy la Hunt—Return to Argeles.

Argeles, Tuesday, August 17th.—The heavens smiled upon us this morning. I was up at half-past four. Baran called. We decided on the expedition, and, after the usual preparations, (Baran having started at half-past five, with the horses,) at seven o'clock we left our attentive hostess, Madame Daly.

The road is so cleverly managed, that even the "limaçon" did not alarm me. When we got to the new part, near Pierrefitte, opened last year, we walked down the old road, by which, I think, one has a finer view of the deep, rich gorge, and of the striking position of the castle; and there is, too, the additional pleasure of admiring the boldness of the new road. We found Baran in readi-

ness, and, at twenty minutes after eight—I, mounted on a nice little mare, with Baran in attendance at my bridle, and W—— riding by my side—we started for the Vallée d'Azun.

A beautiful path, shaded with well-grown walnut and chesnut trees, brought us to the Chapelle de la Piété, whose position on a mound, jutting into the valley, is peculiarly well calculated for a view, and it certainly enjoys one of the most exquisite imaginable. The beautiful Valley of Argeles is seen in its entire extent, with its wooded extremity branching off into the gorges of Luz and Cauterets : the snowy heights terminate the valleys, and the fine points of Levis and Sholas, are seen to great advantage, bounding, apparently, the valley leading towards Campan. St. Savin, with its striking church, is a most interesting object in the view, and highly picturesque.

We passed through St. Savin, and under the same rich shading of chesnuts, reached Anzizans, the most beautiful spot I ever saw. Indeed, the whole of our ride between St. Savin and Anzizans, was through a scene of soft enchantment, impossible to describe—a fairy land of beauty. Happy-looking villages, or rather

rows of a sort of feudal farm-houses, (not cottages, for none were small, or appeared to contain poor people,) with richly-carved door-ways and window-frames; each standing in a vine-trelliced garden, or orchard. Indian corn was drying before the doors, and large purple grapes clustering over them; and as our cavalcade passed by, numerous pretty faces came to the windows, and old women, in their scarlet jackets and blue petticoats, looked down from the projecting balconies, where they sat spinning in the sunshine.

Certainly I never moved for two hours through a succession of such lovely and varied scenes—sloping lawns, with splendid trees that would have made one imagine it was an old English park, if the silvery summits of snow-mountains had not appeared between the wide-spreading branches of oak and chesnut. There is an old ruined castle at Anzizans, situated on a wooded height above the village, and with it is connected a romantic story which I will relate at the end of our expedition.

We continued to enjoy fine scenery, by a tolerable road, as far as the Village of Sirsix. From it we had a sharp descent, by a rough

path, to reach a bridge which crosses the stream coming from the Valley of Bune. The good road may be accounted for, as I see, by the map, there is, by the Valley of Bune, a passage into Spain.

We had now the Pic d'Arens before us—very fine, as seen from hence. It is very sharp-pointed, perfectly devoid of vegetation, its only partial covering being patches of snow. Having passed through Bune, we crossed the Gave d'Azun by a bridge, and then entered its fine valley, which ranks very high amongst the beauties of the Pyrenees. It is, generally speaking, flat, rich, and highly cultivated through its whole extent, and can boast some magnificent heights ; the Pic de Pares, the Port d'Arens, with its three curious tusks, and the Pic d'Arens, are as fine as any valley in the Pyrenees can boast of.

At the Village of Aucun, we joined the Argeles road, then reached Marsons, and, from it to Arens, passed through the loveliest part of the valley ; this is a frequented pass into Spain, practicable for horses, but very steep. The ride from Aucun was one of twenty minutes, but hours might be lingered through it most agreeably. We rode on to the Chapelle de Nôtre

Dame de Pouy la Hunt, well placed on a high projecting mound at the mouth of the gorge leading to Spain, in a position to answer the double purpose of church and fortress. It took us nearly four hours of leisurely riding to reach this place, and here, having sent back the guide and horses to feed at Arens, we remained to enjoy the beauties around us.

The chapel itself is now held in great veneration, and, on the 15th of this month, the multitude of visitors was very great; but this was not always so. During the Revolution, it was occupied as a military post; and our poor guide shewed us the débris of broken ornaments in the sacristy, and the burnt sides of the confessionals, against which candles had been stuck, as proofs of the degradation it had suffered. He said this took place at the revolution of 1815: he must have been mistaken, but his imperfect French did not allow me to clear up the point.

The style of building and decoration resembles the Spanish churches; the roof is groined, painted blue, and ornamented with stars. The altar, which occupies the entire of the eastern extremity, is rich and gorgeous, with gilding, twisted pillars, &c. One of the niches is occu-

pied by a figure of the Virgin, dressed in pink muslin—a strong likeness of an old friend of ours. The four confessionals and pulpit are also gilt, and in better taste; the floor is the solid and bare rock.

The view is beautiful; an hour soon passed away in its enjoyment, and we sat under the shade of a tree below the church, and refreshed ourselves with an excellent cold chicken, which our worthy guide had the precaution to bring. From this place, there is a fine passage to the Eaux Bonnes, by the Col de Tourtas. Our informant represented it as very interesting, that at a slow rate of going, it would occupy five hours; but that the road is good for horses the greater part of the way.

After we came down from the chapel, I took a view of it, and the picturesque bridge on the way to Spain. From the height beyond the bridge is a fine view down the valley, and up the richly-wooded gorge, which looks very tempting. On reaching Arens, we found a party just arrived in a carriage from Cauterets, by the only practicable route—that of Argeles; and on riding afterwards over the road they had travelled, we did not envy them their trip.

Sketched by Lady Chatterton and drawn on stone by Bichebois

Printed by Lemercier, Perasse et Cie

NOTRE-DAME DE POUY, LA HUNT IN THE VALLEY OF AZUN

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After a little delay, to allow Baran to pack up an acquisition of minerals he had made, we put ourselves en route, at ten minutes after two. At "*Aucun Village*"—a fine punning subject, much to M. Baran's delight,—we took the road to Argeles, and kept along the left bank of the Gave. We met other parties (riders) going up; but they were too late; the beauty of the day was gone, as clouds had gathered over the great heights. We were, though rejoicing in the recollection of what we had seen, also sufferers, being deprived of the pleasure of again seeing and renewing our acquaintance with Mont Né, which is seen from the road to Argeles.

The observation that, in descending, the valleys lose much of their interest, is applicable to this also, but, I think, in a minor degree than to others we had seen. The Valley of Azun continues full of beauty; near Arras it is particularly so; for above the village are the ruins of an old castle, finely situated, and, to judge from its style of architecture and ornament, of the same date as the church of St. Savin. At this village I got a glass of goat's milk, a most seasonable refreshment, and the readiness and good nature with which it was given was very gratify-

ing. We had now to make a considerable descent, by a road occasionally anything but agreeable for a carriage. Numbers of peasants were returning from the market of Argeles, one of the most important in the neighbourhood. It was too late to think of advancing to Lourdes, and indeed I was too much tired for any additional exertion; so we took up our old quarters at the Hôtel de Commerce, at Argeles—dirty, I must own, but having that great attraction to hungry travellers, a "bonne cuisine."

CHAPTER X.

Tale of Nôtre Dame de la Pouy la Hunt, and of the Château d'Anzizans.

THERE is no spot in the Pyrenees, nor perhaps in any part of the world, more lovely than the little village of Anzizans. Its old ruined castle is situated on a woody height, detached from the adjoining mountains, and commanding a view over the three beautiful valleys—those of Argeles, Pierrefitte, and Azun. It was, in old times, the principal fortress of the neighbourhood, from its commanding position, and in the reign of our third Edward, was bravely defended against a large Spanish force by the English Baron, Regnier d'Anzizans.

A story is told of this English Baron which interested me a good deal, connected as it is with the foundation of that old church we visited with so much pleasure, Notre Dame de Pouy la Hunt.

At that period there was a celebrated beauty, the daughter of the Comte de Foix, whose charms were so great that she turned the heads and troubled the hearts of half the knights in France. Being of a royal house, and a great heiress, Leonora's father was naturally rather fastidious in the choice of her husband, and the young lady herself had hitherto looked coldly upon all the suitors who thronged to the court of Foix. At last the English Baron Regnier d'Anzizans made his appearance at a tournament given at Foix, and a mutual passion was the result. This was not to be wondered at, for the handsome gallant knight vanquished every opponent, and himself became a victim to the charms of Leonora, from whose fair hand he received every prize.

But the old Count, her father, did not look kindly upon his suit, for he hated the English, and was jealous of the vast territories they then possessed in France ; so Baron Regnier was dismissed, and, lest the young Leonora should persist in her sudden fancy, the Count immediately entered into a treaty of marriage for her with the Prince of Aragon. In vain she wept, and implored to be allowed to go into a convent rather than wed a man she hated. Her father

was inexorable : the Prince soon arrived at Foix, and an early period was fixed for the marriage.

Leonora had never seen him before, but as he was a very handsome as well as valiant prince, she seemed to be soon reconciled to her fate, and received his homage with apparent pleasure. But before she signed the contract which was to seal her fate for life, Leonora begged a favour of her father.

" I will consent," said she, with one of her most winning smiles, " to marry the man I dislike, provided you give my favourite attendant, Margaret of Pamiers, in marriage to the English noble who sued in vain for my hand. He made a deep impression on her heart during that fatal day," continued Leonora, with a sigh, " and since I cannot——"

" But how know you that he will consent?" interrupted the Count. " She is, indeed, of nob le birth, but herdower is not considerable, and even my Leonora must confess she is much your inferior in beauty."

" Well," replied his daughter, " this may be the case ; but still Margaret herself fancies Baron Regnier will gladly accede to the proposal ; and I can only say, that, should he do so, I will no

longer oppose your wishes. Despatch a messenger without delay to the Castle of Anzizans; and if the reply be favourable, my dear Margaret shall be married the very same morning you have fixed for the celebration of my nuptials."

The Count de Foix, though much surprised, was delighted at his daughter's proposition, and immediately acceded to her wishes, though he scarcely hoped to obtain Baron Regnier's consent.

In four days the messenger returned, with a letter from the Baron, in which he declared his readiness to receive the fair Margaret's hand, and promised to appear on the day appointed to claim her as his bride. All was now bustle and preparation in the Château of Foix; that fortress, which still bears so many traces of its former magnificence, was then one of the proudest in southern France.*

Besides the numerous family of the bride, and the large retinue which had accompanied the Spanish Prince, the Count had invited all the principal nobility of the neighbourhood, and even many English knights from Bayonne and Bordeaux, to grace the ceremony with their presence.

* See a view of it, towards the end of the volume.

On the morning of the eventful day, Leonora and her friend Margaret were attired in splendid dresses, and though their birth and fortune were very different, yet, by Leonora's express wish, their costume was exactly alike.

Leonora first advanced to receive her father's blessing; and then giving her hand to the Prince of Aragon, she was led by him to the altar. She proceeded with a firm step, and as she passed near the English Baron, her look seemed to say, that if he had for a moment possessed her heart, she was now well pleased to wed a prince so much superior in rank, and nearly his equal in beauty and accomplishment.

Margaret of Pamiers, conducted by her mother, was then presented to her future lord. She trembled violently as the handsome English Baron took her hand, and he was obliged to support her to the altar, at which they all four knelt, and received the nuptial blessing from the venerable Bishop of Pamiers.

The ceremony was ended. Nobles and courtly dames crowded forward to congratulate the

Prince and his bride. The English Baron, on the plea of having a long journey to perform that day, took leave immediately of his noble host, and, with his fair bride, departed from Foix. The two friends were in despair at parting. The Prince's bride was so overcome at taking leave of the dear companion of her youth, that she refused to appear at the banquet, and, under the plea of sudden indisposition, retired to her own room. The Prince was of course grieved to lose her company, but he was of a joyous disposition, and therefore participated cheerfully in the diversions and splendid fêtes of the day.

It was late when the banquet ended; and when the Prince of Aragon retired to rest, it was evident that he was under the influence of his father-in-law's good wine—a circumstance, however, which did not excite much attention in those days, when all were so addicted to the pleasures of the table.

The next morning, at an early hour, the Count of Foix was awakened from his slumbers by the loud and angry tones of the Prince of Aragon. His hitherto jolly and good-humoured countenance, wore an expression of fury and angry disappointment, for the first sun-beam that had

entered his bridal chamber, disclosed to his astonished gaze the dark complexion and haughty countenance of Margaret de Pamiers.

The Count of Foix was even still more furious at the deception that had been played upon them than the disappointed Prince. He summoned his vassals, and vowed he would never rest till he had taken fearful revenge on the base English noble.

Margaret threw herself at the feet of her enraged husband and injured lord, declaring that she had only practised the deceit to save Leonora's life, as that Princess had vowed to cast herself from the battlements of the highest tower rather than wed a man she could not love.

But Prince Louis of Aragon cast her from him with anger, and accompanied the Count, with a numerous retinue, to try and recover his promised wife.

A formidable army was soon raised, for most of the surrounding states hated the English, and though nominally at peace, were glad to seize on every opportunity of injuring them.

In the meantime, Baron Regnier and his bride, who had a day and a night's start of their pursuers, reached in safety the Castle of Anzizans.

Leonora was enchanted with her new residence, and with the success of a fraud which had secured to herself the lover of her choice, and to her ambitious friend the hand of a prince.

The next day, however, rumours reached them of the approach of hostile troops, and the English Baron prepared for defence. But Leonora evinced no fear.

"I will deal with them," said she, with a proud and somewhat malicious smile. "I have a spell which will soon turn their anger into kindness. I shall yet receive my father's blessing, and the Prince will thank me for giving him such a beautiful and loving wife as Margaret of Pamiers."

"How can that be accomplished?" inquired the Baron.

"By the same spell that enabled me to deceive my father and his whole court, and blind them all so effectually on our marriage-day."

What this spell was—whether the fair lady dealt in the occult sciences, or whether the only magic she used was the power of her charms, and a determined will,—is a mystery that was never cleared up. Certain it is, though the hostile troops exceeded tenfold those of the English

Knight, and though the Count de Foix and the Prince of Aragon declared, as they approached the castle, they would not leave one stone of it standing on another—yet, the moment Leonora appeared before the gates, all hostile feeling seemed dispelled. The old chronicles, moreover, state that the father and deceived lover entered the castle in perfect amity with its owner, and were entertained by the young pair "moult honorablement;" that Margaret, also, soon joined the happy party, and, after a visit of fifteen days, departed, in great state and splendour, with her royal husband, for Saragossa.

The Count of Foix often visited his daughter and her husband in their beautiful castle of Anzizans, and nothing could exceed the happiness they all enjoyed. So far, all is sunshine; but my tale is not yet ended. Sad trials still awaited the young pair.

After the birth of her second child, Leonora's health declined. Soon, she felt that she was dying; and full of deep affection for her husband, and anxiety for her children, she implored Regnier to promise that he would never give to them another mother. The Baron, whose affection for his wife bordered on adoration, swore, without a

moment's hesitation, a solemn oath that nothing should ever induce him to marry again, or love any other than herself; so the beautiful Baroness died in peace, and her disconsolate husband erected a splendid monument to her memory in the chapel of the castle. He was in utter despair; he gave up all society, every pursuit and amusement he had hitherto enjoyed, and passed most of his time in contemplating the marble effigy of his adored wife that was placed over her tomb, and was said to be a striking likeness. He seemed to have lost all interest for everything in the world, and could bear to see no one but his children. The eldest was about three years old, and the little fellow endeavoured, by every tender endearment, to win a smile from his poor father, but in vain.

As time passed, however, and years rolled on, the English Knight, who was by nature of a joyous and social spirit, began to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. Then he gradually mixed with the society of the neighbourhood, and joined in tournaments and festal meetings. At last, rumours were afloat that the fair daughter of Count Sainte Marie had won his heart. One evening, as he was returning late from the dwell-

ing of this fair damsel, and was passing near the spot where the chapel of Pouy la Hunt is now situated—and, perhaps, thinking rather more of her charms than his beautiful deceased wife,—his attention was arrested by a shadowy form that appeared amid the dark trees of the forest, while a strain of lovely music was heard. It was a woman's voice, but more harmonious than any he had ever heard,—yes, even than that of his lost Leonora, though she was celebrated for the sweetness of her voice and her musical powers. There was something so heavenly in the plaintive tones which now met his ear that he paused, and listened with rapture; he stirred not, lest he should disturb the blissful sound. At last it ceased; but the moon had risen above the snow-capped Vignemale, and its clear, bright beams shone through the trees, and illumined the form of a lovely woman.

She was sitting on the edge of that rock which now forms the foundation of the chapel at Pouy la Hunt, and did not appear to see the Baron, who was standing in the shade of a chesnut tree. Without waiting to consider the strange circumstance of a lady being alone at that hour, in such a lonely spot, he approached the fair being,

and with impassioned accents expressed the admiration she had inspired. The voice in which she answered him was even more touching than her song; and tradition says, that the Baron was so enchanted with the beautiful stranger, that before the sun rose next morning he had quite forgotten his oath to his deceased wife, and implored the mysterious lady to be his.

"I will consent," said she, "on one condition—it is, that you promise faithfully to make no inquiry about me; return home, and consider and examine your own feelings calmly; and if you should then remain in the same mind for one week, return to this spot at midnight and you will find me."

One week!—a whole week! Never had time appeared so long to the Baron before. He utterly forgot the Lady of Sainte Marie, whose charms had certainly made a deep, but not lasting impression on his heart. He forgot everything but the lovely mysterious being of the glen, and counted the hours and moments till the expiration of the appointed time. He

had, indeed, returned there every day and night, and searched most diligently in all directions, but no lady, nor even any dwelling where she might have lived, could be seen.

During this tedious week, his little boy fell dangerously ill. The child said he had seen his dear mother in his sleep, and that she looked very unhappy.

"Take me to her," said the little fellow, weeping bitterly. "Let me go to that beautiful tomb, where she smiles on us every day. I want to see if that marble figure, which is all that remains to us of her, looks unhappy too. Pray take me, dear father, to her tomb!"

The Baron, who saw the child was in a high fever, urged him to remain quietly in bed.

"Why will you not take me there?" sobbed the poor child. "You used never to feel happy except when you were praying at her tomb, and now you hardly ever go there. Dear, dear father, take me, pray!"

The child was so eager to go, that his father, having endeavoured in vain to pacify him, took him in his arms, and carried him to the chapel.

A bright sun shone through the painted glass windows and illumined the lofty building, but

the northern transept, which contained the monument, was in shade.

" It is gone !" exclaimed the child, before they had reached that part; " My darling mother is not there !"—and the poor boy burst into tears. The Count hurried towards the monument, and there found, to his horror and surprise, that the statue had disappeared.

" Who has done this ?" inquired the Baron, of his astonished servants, who, on hearing the child's cries, had hastened to the spot.

No one could tell. The beautiful figure, as large as life, which had stood over the sarcophagus, was certainly gone, yet no marks could be discovered that shewed how it could have been taken away.

The terrified priest maintained that when he locked the door, the preceding night, all was safe, for the last thing he did was to trim a lamp which was always burning before the tomb, and he must have remarked if the statue had not been there.

Every one was questioned, and diligent search was made, but no tidings of the statue could be obtained. Little Regnier cried bitterly at the loss of his darling mother, as he called the

statue, and was very ill all the following night and day. The next evening was the one to which Baron Regnier had been looking forward with intense anxiety. He remained with his poor sick child till the last moment, for he loved the boy dearly, and beheld his sufferings with infinite sorrow; at last he tried softly to steal away.

"Do not leave me, dear father—pray, pray do not! I shall have a bad dream again if you go. You know I slept so much more happily last night, when you were near me, and I awoke so much better this morning. Do—do stay!"

The poor Baron was sadly embarrassed. His child's illness, and the mysterious disappearance of the statue, had touched him deeply, and by the boy's sick bed he had reflected on all his conduct since the death of his wife. He now remembered what were his former sentiments, and that—

> "Love
> Admits of no division of its worth:
> We cannot set one gem in many rings."

He had twice nearly proved unfaithful to the solemn promise he had given Leonora on her death-bed. He had been foolishly attracted by the superficial qualities of the demoiselle de

Sainte Marie, who was certainly not the sort of person to prove a good mother for his darling children. But, then, the mysterious stranger! when he thought of her, all self-reproach was hushed. There seemed a magic spell in her image which effaced every other impression from his mind—the recollection of all his past life seemed to fade before that resplendent being. He seemed only to have lived that one night in the glen at Pouy la Hunt. He must return there—an irresistible impulse seemed to urge him; yet he felt it was strange that the boy should be so anxious for him not to go. At last, he tore himself away, and though the poor child uttered a piercing cry, which went to the father's heart, still he would not listen to its touching appeal. The Baron hurried from the castle, but that plaintive sound had left a mournful feeling in his heart: he felt oppressed with the conviction that some dreadful misfortune was about to occur. However, that passion which makes fathers forget their beloved offspring, and causes half the misfortunes in the world, impelled him forward, and at the appointed hour he reached the glen.

The fair being was already there, but I will

not relate the joy of the meeting. The Baron forgot wife, child, and everything, and swore to belong alone to the fascinating creature.

"But there is a fearful penalty," she said, on hearing his determination; "if you wed me, your eldest-born will die."

Regnier shuddered, but so powerful was his love, that he still persisted.

"It could not be," thought he. "No misfortune could possibly be connected with a being so lovely. Her presence must bring a blessing on the house where she dwelt." Thus reasoned the Baron, just as we all do when blinded by passion.

"Then to-morrow night I will come to the castle chapel. Ask no questions of me, but prepare everything for the marriage ceremony; and at midnight open the small door on the western turret, and I will be there."

Regnier again shuddered, for it was through that door his wife's corpse had been carried to the grave, and he had never unclosed it since that fatal night. Before daybreak, he returned home, and with extreme anxiety proceeded to his child's room.

"Oh, dearest father, I am so glad you are

come!" exclaimed the boy; "I thought I never should see you again. I have had such a dreadful night! I saw dear mamma again, and she looked still more miserable, and said that you had deserted her. Oh, I shall never be happy till her dear statue comes back again—do let me go and see whether it is there!"

The child was dangerously ill all day, but towards night he fell into a profound sleep, and the Baron hastened from his sick bed to have everything prepared for the ceremony. The chapel was splendidly illuminated and adorned with a profusion of the choicest flowers. But strange rumours were afloat in the castle, and some of the old servants shook their heads, and declared no good could come of such extraordinary doings; for they were all aware of the oath the Baron had sworn to his dying wife.

"Well, I never thought it would have come to this!" said the old seneschal. "Going to be married, indeed! and to whom, nobody knows. Well, I knew something dreadful would happen ever since our lady's figure disappeared."

Thus all the old servants murmured, and even the priest seemed almost unwilling to perform the marriage ceremony.

The Baron, however, disregarded all these unpleasant surmises, and anxiously waited till the hour of midnight.

"See, our lord!—he is going to that fatal door!" exclaimed the seneschal, as the Baron proceeded to open the western gate. But when they saw him return with the beautiful lady, all murmurs were hushed.

"Surely it is an angel!" they exclaimed. "Well, no wonder our master should forget his promise!"

The marriage rite was performed, and Regnier took the hand of his bride to lead her to the banqueting hall—it was icy cold. He looked at her, and was surprised to observe that her features seemed to alter—her countenance became deadly pale. The Baron shuddered, yet endeavoured to draw his trembling bride towards the door of the church, when suddenly the hand whose icy touch had made him tremble seemed to vanish—he feels nothing. He presses closer to the fair form, but it eludes his grasp. The more he endeavours to approach, the faster it recedes.

But what miracle is this? Those lovely features assume the likeness of his deceased wife! It is she!

"Yes, I am the spirit of your once-loved Leonora! Twice you have plighted your faith to me. Thank God I have saved you from perjury; and now, I trust, when we again meet, it will be at the throne of God. Weep not, dearest Regnier, but repent. Devote the remainder of your life to the service of God and welfare of your dear children; and as some atonement for the sin you have committed, cause a magnificent church to be erected to the Blessed Virgin, on the spot where you first saw my immortal spirit."

So saying, the figure slowly receded towards the tomb, when, to the astonishment of all, it vanished, and the lost statue was again seen in its original position. And it never disappeared again, for the Baron never again caused any disturbance to the spirit of his departed wife. He immediately erected a magnificent church at Pouy la Hunt, and endowed it with ample revenues.

The chapel at Anzizans, and indeed a great part of the castle, has been destroyed; but an old peasant told us that he remembers, when a boy, having seen the miraculous statue of Leonora, the very same, at Nôtre Dame de Pouy la Hunt, where, after the destruction of Anzizans, it was carried, and placed on the principal altar. There it performed almost as many cures and miracles

as the blessed St. Bertrand himself. "It was unfortunately broken in pieces," said the old man, "by the revolutionary troops; but one of the hands still remains entire, and is said to be so icy cold that no one can touch it."

"The hand, then," said I, "does not perform any cures?"

"Oh, no," said the old man, with a mournful shake of the head, "the wicked troops that broke the statue in pieces destroyed the virtue that used to give it such power. In my young days, we believed many good things, and when any one was ill or in trouble, they had only to make a pilgrimage to Nôtre Dame, when they were sure to find assistance. But, as I said before, the revolution spoilt all that, and we have nothing left now, and young people say it is foolish to believe in anything."

And the old man clasped his hands on the top of his staff, and turned away with a look of despondency that went to my heart. Poor man, he has lost his faith in the belief of his ancestors, and has not acquired any firm principles of a better creed. This is probably the case with millions! The old man, however, implicitly believed the tale I have related. He said that it all

happened in good old times, "before mankind had become so wicked, and therefore were under the protection of good spirits who came among us; now God has abandoned us, and his angels and saints appear to us no more!" He might have added, had he known Shakspeare and his friends, that—

"The time hath passed for godlike forms
To leave awhile their starry homes,
And throw 'mid human clouds and storms,
Elysian joy on mortal domes.
The time hath passed when Phœbus flung
His golden spells on laughing earth;
And every field and forest rung
With hymns of bliss and shouts of mirth.

"E'en Love hath folded up his wings,
And from his hand his bow hath cast;
Apollo's lyre hath lost its strings
Its tune hath fled—The Time hath passed!
Gone are the glorious visitants
Who gave this world so bright a grace,
And grief and care—a thousand wants,
And endless crimes, are in their place."

CHAPTER XI.

Journey from Argeles by Lourdes and Pau to les Eaux Bonnes—Difficulty of finding accommodation—Excursion to the Eaux Chaudes—Gabas—Bious Artigues—Splendid scenery at the base of the Pic du Midi de Pau—Walk to the Montagne Vert.

Wednesday, 18*th*.—We had a beautiful morning for our departure from Argeles, and a fine view up its three-branch valleys, with their receding heights and snow mountains. It is, indeed, the most rich, varied, and extensive mountain and valley view I ever saw, and is like looking through three gigantic portals into the very heart of the Pyrenees; all we regretted was the rapidity with which our post-horses carried us through it. At the moment I gave it the preference to any valley I had seen, and I know not if, on reflection, I have altered my opinion.

The hill beyond Argeles, where we stopped to make my third sketch, is a noble point of view,

though the higher summits are no longer visible, yet there is a remarkable variety of outline, and the rich carpeting of Indian corn has its peculiar effect. But near the ruined castle of Bidalos the view is still finer; saw here again some of our now distant friends, the snow heights—the tour of Marboré, and perhaps the Vignemale. Then we had that lovely drive by Lourdes, with its fairy castle hanging high in air above the blue morning mists; and Estelles, with its interesting Betharam; and Coraze, with its dreams of Henri Quatre's young days; and afterwards Pau, shining in all the glory of a hot, mid-day sunshine, with its pretty peasant-girls selling fruit, and its lizards and butterflies basking in the warmth; and every one, rich and poor, looking kind, and happy, and luxurious.

On inquiry, we had found that though a cross-road exists from Lestelles to Loubie, it is not yet in order, so we were obliged to go round by Pau; there we remained for some little time, so as to allow of a visit to M. Lestapis, le Receveur-General, and got some money, which done, we started for les Eaux Bonnes.

Nothing interesting at first, except the distant but indistinct view of the Pic du Midi de Pau,

which for form is one of the most curious we have seen, and in height little inferior to his name-sake of Bigorre. At the little village of Savignac the view improved; we had ascended a considerable height, as our wretched horses, one of which fell en route, testified, and then a fine view of the valley d'Ossun opened on us. Arudy, a considerable village, lay below, and between us flowed the Gave d'Ossun; we had a long descent to the river, and then crossed it to reach the Post.

The drive up the valley is picturesque; but clouds prevented our seeing it to advantage; passed by villages on both sides of the stream, and reached Larruns by an excellent and almost flat road. Larruns is a poor-looking place. Beyond it, we passed a wooden bridge, over the bed of a torrent, now quite dry, but its extent shews what a violent occupant it sometimes has. Soon after, the roads to the Eaux Bonnes et Chaudes branch off; we took the left to reach the former place. Mr. T—— told me that the ascent was so gradual as to be scarcely perceptible! Where could his powers of perception have been? For the fact is, that though the road is excellent, and the ascent gradual,

yet it was most perceptible, not only to ourselves but our horses.

We attained a very great height, winding up a pretty valley, affording at one place a sight of a snow-sprinkled mountain. Our ascent did not even cease with our arrival aux Eaux Bonnes, for the little town is situated on a considerable slope ; its street has but one side, that opposite the houses being occupied by a kind of garden—a decided advantage les Eaux Bonnes possess over the other watering-places we have seen.

We had much difficulty to find a lodging ; the hotels we were recommended being all full. The place altogether looked unattractive, so, under the impression that our stay would be short, we decided on taking rooms at the Hotel de l'Europe, though they were both dear and dirty—sixteen francs a day. Here we had a scene ; for when the landlord heard us direct our courier not to take off all the luggage, he regretted his first exertions to secure us, and sent his wife to say that unless we were to stay some time we could not have the rooms—and this, too, after the carriage was partly unloaded ! We got into a rage, and an angry discussion ensued, but we kept possession.

Immediately after breakfast, on the following morning, we resolved to visit the Eaux Chaudes, to see what accommodation was attainable there. A donkey was secured for me, and W—— walked. We had been told that it would not take more than an hour to reach the Eaux Chaudes, but full two hours elapsed before we arrived, and they were two of the hottest I ever felt. We descended towards Larruns, and at a short distance from it, turning to the left, proceeded up a hill towards the pass called La Hourat, which forms the entrance to the gorge of the Eaux Chaudes. The ascent is very steep; towards the top the road, narrows where the solid rock has been cut, and rises in a perpendicular wall on either side, on emerging from which a striking scene meets the eye.

The pass is extremely narrow, and the sides, which are so steep as to be clothed with but a scanty vegetation, rise to a great height on either side, while deep, deep below, is heard the roar of the torrent in its very confined channel, whilst the eye can just distinguish the white foam of its agitated water.

This passage was opened by the Princess Catherine, sister to Henri Quatre; and on the left

hand, after passing through it, there is a small chapel, with an image of the Virgin and child, and an inscription commemorating the kindness of the princess, and another urging the traveller to offer up a prayer for defence against the dangers of the pass, and giving the form of the address.

I gladly took refuge from the scorching sun within its walls, and sat down to rest, and to think of that interesting Princess Catherine who had so often passed this spot. The shade and cool breeze were so delightful, that I thought of remaining there until W—— returned from a voyage of discovery to the Eaux Chaudes, but, after some rest, I resolved to encounter the oppressive heat, and off we started.

The valley is so narrow as to shut out a view of the great heights; but its boundaries are graceful and wild, being rocky, and well wooded.

The Eaux Chaudes is a dull-looking little place, with scanty accommodation, and that of an inferior description. We saw but one lodging which could have held us. This we engaged at twelve francs a-day. We were taking some coffee in one of its rooms, when Lord N—— came in and paid us a long visit. Dr. H—— called, and we walked with him; he spoke of a

striking proof of the efficacy of the waters in a case of rheumatism.

We afterwards called on Lady N——, whom we found at home, and were delighted to see. We heard that they are going to Pau on Tuesday; and as this dull little place would thus lose all its attraction for us, we gave up our lodgings, delighting our host with a present of five francs. A fine public bathing establishment is now being built here, which is to cost 300,000 francs. Our stupid old donkey-driver, not seeing us where he expected, concluded that we had left for Eaux Bonnes, and started off. We had to send after him—luckily, with success; but he had gone a long way, and whilst waiting, I attempted a sketch outside the town. It was near five when we left the Eaux Chaudes, therefore our journey home was cool and delightful. Lord N——, who had good-naturedly ridden after our donkey, accompanied us more than half way to the Eaux Bonnes, contributing not a little to the pleasure of the trip. The evening was cool, because the sun was off the valleys, so the fatigue was comparatively nothing, and we got home in an hour and a half.

The great business of the following day was to place ourselves in comfortable lodgings—

rather a difficult matter. The rooms, au Rez-de-Chaussée, at the Maison Cazeau, will not be vacant until Monday, but we saw some rooms au second, à l'Hôtel des Quatre Nations, which I think will do. Foreigners, when about to leave, are very good-natured in allowing the inspection of their apartments: the family of a French Marquis admitted us to see the rooms they occupied, in the midst of their packing; and a Frenchman, who was in possession of another which we wanted, was in the act of being shaved when we were ushered into the room by the master of the house. Seeing what was going forward, I naturally drew back; but the French gentleman was not the least annoyed at being thus interfered with, and, with the towel stuck under his chin, most gallantly took me by the hand, and insisted that I should see the rooms.

The result was, that we engaged five rooms, holding seven beds, for eleven francs a-day, a price which shews that no more visitors are expected. A traiteur has agreed to furnish dinners for ourselves and servants for ten francs a-day. At Cauterets we were far better and more abundantly supplied for eight francs. How

little is report to be depended on! The Eaux Bonnes is usually extolled for cheapness, and for the excellency of its hotels; we have found them, in both respects, inferior to all that we have met with, except Luchon.

The weather changed this evening; we had heavy rain, accompanied with fog, thunder, and lightning during the night. Our host of l'Europe sent a message of reconciliation, and wanted to give us rooms at a reduced rate; but his repentance came too late—we had engaged the other rooms, and thus had a safe opportunity of lecturing him upon the sad consequences of extortion.

The Promenade de Grammont is beautiful. The woods where it is situated were cut down some years ago; but, fortunately, several old beech trees—most of them ancient pollards—have been left, and have now assumed fantastic and very picturesque forms. Of these, advantage has been taken in forming the walks. Seats are placed under some, and the path has been made to turn near others, so that their beauty is thus brought into play. The rest is hardly more than underwood, yet, mixed as it is with box—which grows in great abun-

dance — heath, fern, and a variety of beautiful wild flowers, it forms a most agreeable walk. The Pavilion, on a wooded isolated rock above the town, is a pleasant lounge, and commands a complete view of the village and the valley, with Larruns in the distance below.

We had arranged, with the renowned Esterle, the guide par excellence, a visit to Gabas this morning. Our plan is, to drive there and have a horse for me for a further advance to la Case de Broussette, so as to enjoy a view of the Pic du Midi de Pau. We engaged a carriage conditionally—if the day be fine; a condition which the weather did not realize. We were up at a little after five. Heavy fog. Esterle came about seven, and, on his announcing "que le tems n'est pas joli," the expedition was postponed. Fortunately, I had a conversation with our host, M. Tourney, about our expedition to Gabas, and he advised us, instead of going to the Case de Broussette, to turn to the right on leaving Gabas, and proceed to a valley at the foot of the Pic du Midi. To this advice we are indebted for one of the most interesting views we have enjoyed—inferior only to that of Gavarnie and the Port de Venasque.

On Thursday evening, there was a conjuror's exhibition. We mistook the hour, and had taken a long and very agreeable walk on the Promenade de Grammont. I came home rather tired, and, having had no time to rest, gave up the conjuror. He shewed some good tricks ; but the novelty to W—— was the management of some birds, which were trained to lie as if dead, to place themselves as if prepared for roasting, to fire a little cannon, &c. He saw Esterle at the exhibition, who cannot accompany us to Gabas to-morrow, being engaged to go with a party to Cauterets ; he, however, undertook to procure for us a good guide, a saddle-horse, and carriage. W—— was up at five on Friday morning, and on looking out of the window, saw our new guide, Hurcade—horse, carriage, and weather being all in order.

At half-past seven, we drove from the door, and in an hour reached les Eaux Chaudes, as we had already overtaken our guide and horse, we drove through without stopping. Soon after leaving it, we reached the Pont d'Enfer, and saw the Cascade Goust, of which there is a lithograph by Carpenter, in Moreau's Guide. We heard a most exaggerated account

of the terrors of this road. It is excellent; and though generally without any protection, yet the road itself is so wide and good that it gives even in the descent very little feeling of danger.

The lofty boundaries of the valley beyond the Eaux Chaudes, both in wood, form, and colour, are very fine. The summit at one place is a perpendicular wall of rock; the colour of which, a reddish white tint stained with black, gives it the appearance of a work of art. It has the same resemblance to marble as Gavarnie. As we advanced, continually though gradually ascending, we saw below us the remains of a foundry, and apparently good roads leading into the other valleys.

All these valleys and heights are covered with wood; and to a great extent, including the valleys of Gabas and Bious, supplied, for a long period, the French navy with masts. Sometimes, to get down one single mast, the destruction of minor trees, to make a bed for its descent &c., was enormous, and thus the forests greatly suffered, but now they are again shewing some fine timber; and one of the peculiar features of the scenery here is the superior size of the wood.

Some noble old fir trees, in different stages of age and decrepitude, are still standing, giving great additional interest to the valley we ascended after leaving Gabas.

We reached Gabas in two hours and a half; here we left the carriage, and started for Bious Artigues, on horseback—Hurcade and W—— on foot. Following the advice of M. Tourney, we turned to the right, and thus quitted the road leading to Spain: better, from what I heard, than the one we took, but far less interesting. The Gave de Broussette and the Gave de Bious unite at Gabas, and form its Gave, to change its name to d'Ossun, when it unites with the Valentin near Larruns.

We ascended by the right bank of the Bious, through a fine and picturesque forest, the Gave having worked for itself a wild bed at an immense depth below, of which the occasional glimpses we caught were very fine. Several old firs occur, perfectly decayed, but yet standing—many with shivered tops, whilst the lower parts shewed no symptoms of decline. These remains of the original inhabitants of the forest were very striking, giving the impression that man had never been in these retired fastnesses to disturb them.

We overtook a flock of sheep, driven by a fine specimen of a mountain shepherd. A handsome woman, occupied—as all the women are—with the distaff; a donkey carrying a few necessaries, the essential copper vessel for making cheese, and a wooden instrument which appeared a kind of presser, a few goats, and the indispensable large dog, formed, with the shepherd and his flock, the party, who were moving to another pasturage up the mountains.

After a ride of about twenty minutes, we exchanged our rough road for a steep and rocky path, which brought us to a plateau covered with turf, and comparatively level. From this, another steep and rocky ascent, and then another plateau of greater size, affording good pasturage. A zig-zag path, at the upper end, gave us a view down the gorge we had left, and shewed us what a height we had attained. We now reached a wood, by a narrow path, cut in a steep slope, rather a nervous one, so I dismounted, and soon after turning to the right, we reached the Plateau of Bious Artigues; and what a magnificent view opened upon us!

The Pic du Midi d'Ossun, or Pau, in point of height, is much inferior to several of the Py-

renees. M. Moreau gives it an elevation of 1496 toises, or, I believe, about 9673 English feet. Inglis gives the Pic du Midi de Bigorre 9721 feet; but as he has copied this from some French work, probably the feet given would be French. In that case, it would be 1628 toises, or, in English feet, 10,469. Inglis gives the height of ten Pyrenean mountains, and the Pic du Midi de Pau is the lowest; but though the noble height now immediately before us is thus inferior in height, in grandeur of effect it exceeds any I have ever seen.

It rises majestically from the little plain of La Ressec, and no intervening height occurs to diminish the effect. The Maledetta, seen from the Port de Venasque, is not by any means so striking, as the surrounding mountains are apparently so nearly of the same height. This circular plain of La Ressec is exceedingly beautiful: it is the arena of a noble amphitheatre. We descended from the Plateau to it, that we might enjoy the effect more completely; noble heights, generally covered with fine timber, seem to surround it so perfectly that no outlet is visible, the solitary saw-mill being the only indication of the presence of man. The lower part

of the Pic is covered with a full-grown forest, and some straggling firs extend high up towards the rocky region; then the bare rock starts upwards in all its superiority, and seems, at this distance, so perpendicular as to defy all attempts at ascension; but, though difficult, it is far from impracticable. Its fantastic and peculiar shape gives it a character distinct from any other.

The day was perfect—not a cloud; and yet the air was fresh and not oppressively hot: we enjoyed it completely. I made the annexed sketch, which gives, however, but a very faint idea of the loveliness of the scene.

Fancy the most extensive and beautiful English park you ever saw, with all its forest glades, deep sylvan glens, green hills and valleys—its noble river, now gliding in calm majesty along a cheerful plain, kissed by the wide-spreading branches of oaks and beeches coeval with the Conquest, and now reflecting the rocky banks, and thus redoubling the scene of beauty,—fancy all this, with the addition of wild flowers more various and lovely than any English conservatory can produce, while large butterflies and graceful lizards bask in all the luxuriance of southern

Sketched by Lady Chatterton

G. Rowe Lith., Cheltenham

sunshine. Imagine all this, at the foot of a mountain the most beautiful and fantastic of all the Pyrenean giants. But "mountain" is far too vague and common-place a term for such an object; it looks like the commencement of some giant fabric, some mighty pillar intended to reach heaven. Description, however, is useless; but I think it would be worth while to come all the way from England solely for the purpose of standing half an hour on the Plateau of Bious Artigues. And such a lovely day as we had!—the air was so fresh and invigorating, the whole face of nature sparkled, and everything seemed to dance and sport with delight, as if the tears which nature shed during the last few days were turned to smiles of joy, and, as on the cheek and eye of beauty, only tended to heighten the charm.

Another great attraction of Bious Artigues, for me is, that it is not a valley; and in these Pyrenees one never seems able to get rid of valleys. In general, there is nothing intermediate between a mountain top—a real pic, on which there is hardly room to stand comfortably,—and a deep, narrow valley, where one feels it impossible

ever to get out, and a perfect miracle how one ever got in. These valleys are beautiful; but I am tired of them, and therefore doubly enjoyed that lovely plain. It put me in mind of Mrs. Hemans' description of a Spanish scene:—

"I made a mountain brook my guide,
Through a wild Spanish glen,
And wander'd on its grassy side,
Far from the homes of men.

"It lured me with a singing tone,
And many a sunny glance,
To a green spot of beauty lone—
A haunt for old Romance.

"A dim and deeply-bosom'd grove
Of many an aged tree,
Such as the shadowy violets love,
The fawn, and forest bee.

"The darkness of the chesnut bough,
There on the waters lay,
The bright stream reverently below
Check'd its exulting play."

The extensive forests belong to the Commune of Larruns, and are carefully attended to. At the mill, the timber is sawed into planks; when done, women transport them on their heads to the road near Gabas, and receive only six

sous for carrying three large planks down the long and rough road we passed.

We remained at the Plateau for more than an hour, and then left it with regret; by this is a route into Spain, and consequently into the Vallée d'Aspe, which sounds very attractive. By ascending the Col des Moines, a lake is reached, whose waters flow by the river Aragon into Spain; and Moreau says, from a height near it the plains watered by the Ebro may be seen. We now retraced our steps, but as, owing to the steepness of the road, I walked a considerable way, we were rather longer in our descent than our ascent. We reached Gabas in an hour and twenty minutes, where we got into the carriage, and started for Les Eaux Chaudes. From the fine oak tree near the road, about half an hour from Gabas, we again enjoyed the beautiful prospect which we admired so much on approaching. Here is a fine view of the Pic du Midi—indeed the only one that occurs on the whole road. It is likewise invisible on the other road, so far as the Case de Broussette, and is not seen till after a ride of nearly two hours further, so that to see the pic to advantage no course remains but that which we followed.

As we drove home we again admired the very fine trees which fill the deep ravine in which the Gave flows. We reached the Eaux Chaudes in an hour, but were an hour and half going to the Eaux Bonnes, which shews how much more fatiguing for horses is the long and gradual pull up to the Eaux Bonnes, than the short and steep ascent to the rocky gateway on the road to the Eaux Chaudes. We returned delighted with our excursion—a feeling which remained even in spite of the wretched dinner M. Barthe had provided for us.

Saturday.—This lovely day tempted us to walk to the top of the Montagne Verte. We at first followed the road to the village d'Aas, and, near it, had a fine view of the village and valley. We left the road afterwards, and scrambled up the mountain; I know not if much time was gained by this manœuvre; one thing is certain, that by it I made a hot walk much hotter. The air on the summit was delightful, and we remained for an hour talking to some peasants who were on the top. The view of the plain is not good; but that of the Pic de Ger and its associates very fine, as well as that of the entire range towards

the Eaux Chaudes, and the lofty boundary of the Valley of Larruns. One of the distant heights, part of the great chain, is of a very fantastic form—its name I could not discover.

CHAPTER XII.

Pleasant scenery and walks at les Eaux Bonnes—French savoir-vivre—Promenade Jaqueminot—Ascent of the Pic de Ger.

Wednesday.—Still at the Eaux Bonnes: I have grown to like this place better than any of the Pyrenean bathing places we have been at; yes, better even than Cauterets, and, strange to say, I believe the reason is, because it has far less of the beautiful character of Pyrenean scenery. It is less grand and sublime, but more quiet and common-place, and reminds me a little of Matlock, and many other pretty varied, wooded, tumbled-about hill and valley scenes which I have often luxuriated in, and learnt to love.

When we feel ill it is delightful to fall upon some common-place "freundliches" spot, after a long gazing and straining at the sublime. By

straining, I mean mounting and scrambling about, till every bone seems jarred out of its place.

Not that the scenery of this spot is very quiet or tame—indeed, it may appear quite the reverse to those who begin their tour among the Pyrenees at the Eaux Bonnes—which is the best plan. It would then appear very grand; but after the giant heights of the Maledetta, Port de Venasque, and the wild valleys near Luchon and Gavarnie, this dwindles into a parallel with homely and loved scenes :—

> "I come
> To this sweet place for quiet. Every tree,
> And bush, and fragrant flower, and hilly path,
> And thymy mound, that flings unto the winds
> Its morning incense, is my friend."

Fine scenery ought to have such a beneficial effect on the mind as to embue it with kindly and benevolent feelings. I fear it has done so very little with me—and yet I have seen much of Nature's loveliness, and felt it most deeply too!

The near walks here are so delightful that I am less tempted than in other places to make long expeditions. Here is shade and variety for every hour, even the mid-day sun does not pene-

trate to the walks which overhang the series of cascades up the glen of Valentin, leading towards Torlas.

I think the old description of an English summer—"three days fine and then a storm"—might be very well applied to this climate; only during the first part of our visit to the Hautes Pyrenees, it might be reversed into "three days storm, and then one fine one."

The costumes are beautiful. In these parts, the people look good and happy, and much more intelligent than in the valleys of Luchon, Luz, &c. Here, too, are many pretty girls. At Luchon, I never saw anything in the shape of a young girl; there, the whole population seemed to pass from a miserable, puny childhood, to a goitred and shrivelled old age. Oh, those goîtres, how uncomfortable they looked!—what a sad pain in the throat they used to give me!

Tuesday, 24*th*.—Still stormy weather. Vivid lightning each night, and the swollen torrents, rushing down through this little ravine, make a roar, which, united with thunder growling in the mountains, does not at night improve my repose.

Monday, 30*th*.—Started at seven on a donkey,

and went up to the top of Jaqueminot. We had shade—the thick cool shade of large oaks and beeches—till near the top, and then the more chequered, but fragrant and delicious, shelter of pines. The air was cool at the summit, and we sat down for some time to enjoy the fine and extensive view of the Valley D'Ossun, &c. I distinguished Pau, and several villages near it, until the eye was lost in the blue distance far beyond. Thus I have discovered an additional charm of this place, that an hour and a half's ride leads one up to a spot from whence the eye enjoys a glorious outlet—a wide, extended view, over a mountainless country—a spot which has the additional advantage of a comfortable-looking road winding all the way towards it. I never felt, before our visit to the Pyrenees, the truth of what Hazlitt says about his inability to imagine any scene different from the one in which he is actually placed.

I have been sometimes, particularly at Luchon, so possessed by mountains, so imbued with torrents and precipices, that I began to doubt whether the world was composed of anything else, and imagined that my former plain and level life had been only a happy dream.

The society here is very pleasant; we have met several French families, who are extremely agreeable, and disposed to be very sociable. With all our boasted common sense and steadiness, the English shew less tact in adapting themselves to the peculiar circumstances of their position than the French, who, however volatile they may be, have much *savoir-vivre*, which after all is true wisdom. They do not perpetually want to be where they are not, and what they are not, but are satisfied, or appear to be so, with their age and their position. Hence it is, that there is less striving to belong to a particular set in society, and that elderly women are satisfied to go about with their own grey hair, and enjoy the true pleasures of age. While young girls are satisfied to be young girls, and seem less in a hurry to exchange their simple, almost childlike attire, and little homely pleasures, for the uncertain joys and greater honours of a married life. In all ranks here it is the same; a peasant is contented to be a peasant, and to dress like one—a servant, like a servant; whereas in England, on the contrary, each person strives to appear of a rank to which he does not belong.

We have no term in English equivalent to

savoir-vivre, yet how much does it express—a whole life of happiness and sociability. The English should sometimes reflect on this, for they have no natural *savoir-vivre*. We do not instinctively seize upon and pursue the manner of life most calculated to make ourselves, or those about us, happy.

The French certainly possess far more than we do the valuable art of knowing how to enjoy themselves, and one meets with much fewer dull people than in England. There is less of that flatness and pretension, which often render country neighbours so disagreeable to each other in our dear land. How amusing is the chance mixture of different elements of society sometimes to be met with in country places! A well-meaning, kind-hearted, regular country pair, with two blooming daughters, come to dinner at a neighbour's house, where a party of what are called fine London people is assembled. The country pair, strong and rigid in the consciousness of sterling worth, come ready prepared for resistance, and to be, as they expect, looked down upon by the grandees. This feeling fills them with restraint, and diminishes even those small powers of conversation or agreeableness which a

retired life and want of habit of the world have enabled them to acquire. They answer with cold disdain, or sharp brevity, the civil advances which those who are accustomed to much society are sure to make. The well-bred wit, or celebrated beauty, again, attempts to converse, but the country neighbour foolishly will not unbend, and looks graver and duller than ever.

Thus the impediment to sociability is often on the country neighbour's side, and produces much of that apparent pride, or finery, of which they complain. These good and well-meaning people make no endeavour to amuse, or to exert those conscientious feelings of real benevolence and kindness on which they pique themselves. Besides, a petted beauty or successful man of the world expects to have something done for their amusement, and cannot help despising those who only stare with awe, and have not penetration enough to discover that a person who has received great admiration, or has become celebrated in the world, must have some good qualities, and is likely to possess an unprejudiced and expansive spirit, which, when met with unpretending kindness, easily makes allowance for any deficiencies in persons who have not possessed the advantage

of much intercourse with the world. Both parties, then, get sulky, and, for the time, each really becomes what his antagonist supposes—the man of the world fine and exclusive, and the country neighbour stupid and stiff.

Saturday. W—— intended to have ascended the Pic de Ger this morning, but Esterle the guide proved false; he was to have returned last night, so as to start with him, but he has not appeared. As the weather looks likely to continue fine, W—— determined to wait for him another day, and we decided on another excursion, this morning, to the Promenade Jaqueminot.

The weather was delightful. We had ordered the donkey for half-past seven; but some delay occurred in changing the saddle for a fauteuil. We had shade almost the entire way, which was fortunate, for the ascent is steep, and the road, in some places, out of order. We kept continually in the forest, having occasional views of the Pic de Ger, and admiring the fine old beeches which are so strikingly ornamental. We thus, after an ascent of nearly an hour and a half, reached the turf, near which is a very extended view over the plain.

The road, properly so called, here ceases; we

exchanged it for a path which conducts for some time through a forest of fine old firs.

The ascent now became more rough and steep, with less of shade. We continued for about a quarter of an hour in the forest, where occur some fine specimens of ruined firs which the charcoal makers are causing rapidly to disappear.

Having passed the forest, we reached the top of Mount Gourzi, by a steep pasture; and enjoyed the view from the summit. The Pic de Ger shews very finely, and on a clear day, which this is not, the view must extend far beyond Pau. By this, is the mountain road to the Eaux Chaudes. We had a prosperous descent, and reached home before twelve, having found it, out of the shade, very hot. We intended a visit this evening to the celebrated botanist, GastonLacaze, at Pages Beost, and had actually started; but on reaching the other side of the bridge, though past five, we found the sun was still very hot; so that, with to-morrow's expedition in view, we gave it up, and returned home.

We heard of Esterle on our return, and he afterwards called on W——, and then said he could not accompany him to the Pic de Ger, as he had some patients "à frictionner," who had been waiting

most impatiently during his absence, and to them he must devote the entire day—so this favourite remède of Dr. Darralde's turns out an unlucky one for W——, and obliges him to be satisfied with Esterle's nephew—a great annoyance after the delay. W—— arranged to start at four o'clock, and, as a preparation, went to bed before nine.

I now give W.'s account of the expedition :—

"I was up at half-past two to look out; the weather looked delightful. I could not sleep again, so I commenced my preparations. Whilst heating my coffee in our Etna,* some of the coffee boiled over into the spirits of wine, which was thus sent over the table-cloth; I had much difficulty to extinguish the flames, as my mouth was at the moment fully occupied with bread and butter; however, I at last succeeded, and got off for the fright. My guide kept me waiting a little, so that I did not start until half-past four. The valley we entered immediately on leaving the town was still in deep gloom, and there was something awful in its darkness and silence as we ascended the rugged path. In fifty-

* A most useful little travelling companion for heating liquids, sold by Jones, 201, Strand.

five minutes we reached some snow, and in about half-an-hour afterwards arrived at what may be termed the first stage of our expedition —the Fontaine de Gesque.

"We were now about to leave the Valley of Lacoume, or rather the ravine so called, for the sides rise very abruptly from the torrent. The water here is very good; it trickles over the rock, and is received into a wooden trough, placed here for the convenience of all animals. We had been hitherto in a beech wood, mixed with box. After leaving the fountain we passed through a bare slope, and thus reached a bridge of snow, which we crossed, and then ascended on the other side; turning to the right, through a fine fir forest, growing some noble trees; the great and precipitous rocks, the Lasquindetes, were above us.

"We passed the grottoes hollowed out at their base, and soon reached the position for izard shooting. The proximity of the rock makes this a good post; for the game, when prevented from passing by the pic, must here come within shot, as the intermediate rock is too high and perpendicular to allow them to pass.

"Beyond this, occurs what the guide termed a 'bien mauvais pas,' and so I thought it; but

in returning, compared with what I encountered in the interval, it did not appear so bad. It consists in the doubling a sharp ridge of the Lasquindetes, which projects over the valley; the path is over inequalities on the face of the rock, and the passage is a nervous business. We had now left the Sapins; the line of the Lasquindetes receded, and we advanced up a steep turf, occasionally covered with debris. My espartillos, the kind of sandal worn by the peasantry, and which are so excellent for climbing rocks, are not so good on the slippery grass, as I found, unluckily to my cost, on our return. The crenallated and almost perpendicular Lasquindetes formed a huge line of fortification on the left.

"At seven, we reached the Cabane de Ger, a low mountain gîte for the shepherd of these lonely pastures. It is composed entirely of stones: but even here things are progressing, for a hut of a better description is being built near it, which will boast some timber in its roof. The Cabane is now deserted, the shepherd being in another part of the mountain.

"We continued our heavy pull up the turfy slope, alongside of a ravine, in which lay large

patches of snow. The Pic du Caperan, which means the Curé, being the breakfast station, was now the object to reach: it lay before us, and on our left, the apparently smooth Col de la Spada, an off-set from the Pic de Ger. Near the foot of the Caperan, is a curious hole, the upper part of which is circular, and resembles a well, and is of immense depth; a stone thrown in was heard bounding, from rock to rock, to a great distance below. Here is an excellent spring of water, though not in the abundance Moreau talks of, and as no water is to be had higher up, this is the usual breakfasting place. We made it ours, and passed half-an-hour most agreeably in the occupation.

"The scene was peculiarly grand—the great pic still towered above us; the bare rocks around shewed scarcely a trace of vegetation: naked and splintered, their bases covered with debris, they proclaim an acquaintance with the elements in their wildest form. The venerable Curé (Caperan) rises in the midst of this grand scene of desolation—what a congregation is his! On resuming our march, the next object was to reach the summit of the Caperan—a short, but fatiguing affair. To effect this, we crossed a

deep bed of broken stone, which we exchanged for a rocky piece of turf, and in twenty-five minutes reached the summit of the Caperan, a grassy plateau, commanding a noble view of the Pic du Midi, &c. But I was now satisfied that I had no chance of seeing the plain—clouds were fast gathering all around.

"For some distance now the direction was over a tolerably level turf, then a gradual ascent, until we came to the foot of the Pic itself, then it became very steep and rocky along the edge of a precipice. When we stopped to breathe, my guide, to *amuse me*, detached with his stick a large block of stone; its weight set it in motion, and down it thundered, bounding from rock to rock. The effect was grand, but terrific; it was impossible not to shudder at the thought of what would be one's fate in case of accident. After it was out of sight, I heard it still crashing downwards; then it re-appeared hurrying along with increased rapidity at a great distance below. The guide afterwards detached two others, but the effect was not so good, for the stones were decayed, and were soon shivered to pieces.

"The summit of the pic has two heads: we were ascending the edge of the ravine which

separates them, and reached the top in forty-four minutes after leaving the summit of the Caperan, which now looked very humble at our feet, thus accomplishing the entire ascent in five hours. The two heads are close to each other, and very nearly of a height; the guide insisted that the one we stood upon is the higher, but though I cannot help thinking that the other has rather the advantage, yet I am not surprised that the guides should have voted the preference to this, for to reach the other, a dangerous and narrow ridge must be passed, and no object is attained by the exploit. A French chasseur, last year, was on it, when he missed a double shot at some izards, which passed close to him; but this is not to be wondered at, as his footing could not have been very steady. I remained nearly an hour on the top. The view is very fine; but, for me, it was confined to the mountains—the plain being in clouds. The noble Pic du Midi is the great object. The height, called, by the guide, Montaigne d'Artouste, but which, I should say, is the "Soubi" of the map, exhibits much snow: and is, according to the same authority, 163 metres higher than the Pic du Midi. I saw, in its wild valley below, the Lac d'Artouste, which

supplies les Eaux Bonnes with trout. The Pics de Soussi and la Sisette, which looked important from the Plateau du Caperan, were insignificant now, compared with the greater heights in view all around. My guide could not tell me the names of the distant mountains, except the Pic de Gavisan, which looks very lofty. Soubi lay due south, the Pic du Midi, south-west; the Col de Torte, north-east; near it, but beyond, is the Col d'Arbas. The view was not so extensive as that from Mount Né, but wilder, as I saw nothing but mountain tops.

"After much enjoyment from this magnificent sight, the increasing clouds warned us it was time to depart. There was not a breath of wind, and the thick white clouds, rising perpendicularly from the tops of the mountains, had a curious effect, as if caused by fires upon them. As we descended, we saw an izard perched on one of the heights over Gourzi, watching our movements. This, and an eagle, soaring above the pic, were the only animals we saw: I thought we should have fallen in with some 'perdrix blanches,' but was disappointed.

"The descent was comparatively easy: in an hour we reached our breakfasting post, at the foot of the Caperan.

"Here, whilst disposing of the remainder of our breakfast, we heard a report, which Esterle took for that of a gun. I thought it like thunder; but the appearance of the sky did not indicate a storm; however, a louder growl convinced us that we had no time to lose; so after a halt of twenty-four minutes, enjoying the *eau sucrée* from the cool, delicious spring, we started, with the hope of reaching la Cabane before the storm broke. As we proceeded, we had a magnificent clap of thunder, gloriously echoed from height to height. It was in this part of the descent, just as I thought all danger past, that my sandals, hitherto so serviceable, played me a *mauvais tour* on the turf: I slipped up, and coming with my hand to the ground, sprained it badly.

"The rain still kept off. We reached the Fontaine de Gesque in one hour, finished here our bottle of wine, and, after a few minutes' delay, started again. The fog became so very thick, that it was almost as dark as night, when we hurried on through the gloomy ravine of Lacoume. It now began to rain heavily, and we reached home with wet jackets, having accomplished the descent in three hours and a half, of which we halted about half-an-hour. I was amply repaid for my fatigue, which was not so

great as after the ascent of Mont Né, though this is much longer and more difficult."

In the evening the guide, Esterle, who is both a poet and musician, brought us a kind of lyre of his own making. It has four or five catgut strings, and, being tuned to a rude flageolet, the musician strikes it with a stick across the strings, keeping up thus an accompaniment to the flageolet, which he plays with the other hand. It is a wild and, though loud, not unpleasant music, in the skilful hands of my guide, who, during our walk this morning, amused me much with his singing. Whilst we were at dinner, some peasants reached the town with a donkey, covered with the skin of a bear they had shot to-day in the woods, near where we had been. The bear had killed eight or ten sheep during the night.

Thursday, a day of rest and arrangement for departure. After various changes, we decided on accepting an invitation we had received to visit a French family at their chateau, near Mauleon, in the Pays Basque, so we mean to leave this place, and proceed to Oleron to-morrow. A letter has just arrived from our kind friend at St. Sebastian, who very cautiously abstains

from any opinion as to the state of Spain, but he holds out no inducement to venture.

In the evening, the two Esterles came, the nephew bringing the copy of a song he had composed on M. Moreau—a very singular composition. From them we heard that the Pic de Ger can, to a certain distance, be approached on horseback by the Promenade Jaqueminot, &c., but it is two hours longer. Esterle said that he accompanied, this year, a lame young lady who mounted to the summit, having rode to the Gesque du Ger.

This morning we intended to have paid the celebrated botanist, Gaston Sacaze, a visit, and some friends were to have gone with us. Our donkey-driver saved us, much to his credit, a useless expedition, for he came to say that Gaston was at the Eaux Bonnes, which I found to be the case from Esterle, who said he was gone to Gabas with some "herboristes" from Pau, but that he would pay us a visit on his return.

This he did accordingly, and we found him a most interesting man, with a fine countenance, his eyes much resembling those of Mr. Webster, the American secretary. His knowledge of botany

appears to be great; he gave us the names of the plants we had collected, and conveyed his information in a very agreeable way. The remarkable thing about him is, that, with a knowledge of great extent, and abilities to understand anything, he is still a complete peasant, and a modest, unassuming man. It was his calling as a shepherd which first gave him a taste for botany—the wish to discover simples useful for cattle; and the same feeling animates him still. He is at present directing his attention to the cure of a disease now prevalent among the cattle, and similar to the one which was so general in England last year. He complained much of the carelessness of public officers on the subject.

CHAPTER XIII.

Journey to Oleron and Tardets—Mauleon—Rural fête—Dance de Roland.

Oleron, Friday, Sept. 3.—*Hôtel Condesse.*—We intended to make an excursion to-morrow into the Valley d'Aspe, and over the mountains to Jaca, in Spain, and have been inquiring about means of conveyance. We find the diligence goes only as far as Urdos, there being no road (except for mules) over the Spanish frontier, while many tours and guide-books have led us to expect there was one for carriages. The diligence leaves this place every morning for Urdos, the last town in the Valley d'Aspe, and reaches it about half-past three. From thence, eight hours' ride on a mule will take one over the mountains to Canfranc, the first Spanish town, and three more to Jaca.

Such is the information we have got from our smiling, talkative host, in this pleasant, venerable old town of Oleron, whilst sitting in a comfortable, well-furnished room, with a highly-polished oak floor, which reflects the walnut secretaire, and bedsteads with their white and blue coverlids.

It is now some time since we have met with such well-rubbed floors ; and I delight in them so much, that, in spite of a bad head-ache, a hot drive, and a still hotter climbing walk into the upper town, I have been dancing and sliding along the polished surface, and performing sundry pirouettes, to the no small amusement of some peasant women, who are selling peaches and pommes cuites at a stall opposite our large, low windows.

Another source of joy besides the polished floor, and which tends (now I come to reflect upon it) in no small degree to give me l'esprit de la dance, and drive away my headache, is, that we are once more travelling *on* a plain, instead of *in* a valley, and have now only a distant though splendid view of the mountains. Oh, the delight I felt to-day the first time I saw a group of peasants with a sky back-ground to

them! Nobody can conceive it who has not passed two long months, chequered with many dark rainy days, in the narrow, deep valleys of the Pyrenees.

Yet the first thing we did, on our arrival here, was to toil up, under a broiling sun, to the church and séminaire in the high town, as if I had not had enough of climbing walks for two months!—ah, but the intense pleasure of knowing that when I had climbed that comparatively little height, I should see *over* something and beyond something, and far, far away into the clear blue low horizon, instead of finding, as in the mountain valleys, after two or even three hours laborious climbing, a high range still barring the view, and no distance to be seen, except far above over our heads!

It was market-day, and we saw the place to great advantage, though in point of dress we have made a bad exchange from the Eaux Bonnes. The capulet here is replaced by the handkerchief with the three projecting corners, the usual grisette coiffeur of the south of France: the costume of the men is the same as we have already seen. We ascended a very steep street which leads to the upper town, whose grass-grown streets and old dilapidated houses, shew that it

is gradually being deserted for the more accessible division where we lodge, and the larger one of St. Marie at the other side of the Gave d'Aspe. The view is extensive from the old town, and on a clear day must be very fine, as a large range of the high chain is visible.

To-day (the 3rd) is hot and threatening: we had hardly reached home before the rain began, and down it came "joliment."*

Oleron is a very old town; it seems to consist of three parts. The Faubourg, on the right bank of the Gave d'Ossun; the Old Town, which was surrounded with a wall, occupies

* Our dinner was excellent, and cost only six francs—that is, three francs a-head. It is worth while to remember it; we had altogether fifteen dishes, as follows, and every dish was good and well dressed:—Soupe au Vermicelle. 1st course—a chicken stewed whole, with young carrots; côtelettes de mouton, sauce tomâte; la cervelle à la sauce; des truites (excellent); fricandeau à l'oseille. 2nd course—roti de gibier, (Becasses, Cailles, &c.); des haricots blancs; des artichauts frits avec du pain; de la crême à la vanille. Dessert—Walnuts, hazlenuts, fromage de Rochfort, grapes, and peaches. Our bill here was the cheapest we have had. The above dinner, with vin et pain à discretion, six francs (4s. 7d.); our four rooms, six francs; breakfast for two, of tea, coffee, milk, very good bread and butter, eggs and polenta, 2. 50.; and tea, &c., in the evening, 1. 50., altogether, 16 francs, (12s. 3d.)

the steep height which lies between the Gave d'Ossun and that of d'Aspe; and then, below it, on the left bank of the Gave d'Aspe, is Sainte Marie, much the largest part, and for which the old town is being deserted.

We went into a bookseller's shop, where was a very nice, civil girl; she and her gouty father were well-informed and communicative, so we sat in the shop for some time, but could purchase no history of Oleron. Their civility induced us to buy a description of Pau, lately published. On Saturday morning we again walked up to the Séminaire, from whence the view is good, but we did not see it completely. This is a large building, now about to be deserted for the new establishment at St. Marie.

At twelve, we started for Troisvilles, to pay our promised visit to M. and Madame de M—— R——, the postillion driving four horses from the boot-box, and with a pair of leaders to take us up the steep gravel street of St. Marie. A view of fine mountains on our left; after twenty minutes, reached the remains of an oak wood, still containing some picturesque old pollarded trees. We continued for some time to wind through the valley, in which flows the little river Vert;

the road generally flat, and the scenery sylvan and pleasing—growing luxuriant vines and maize in great abundance.

We passed a good-looking campagne belonging to Madame ——; in going up the hill near her place, one of our leaders shewed a strong disposition to stop, which habit our coachman attributed to his having formerly belonged to a tax-gatherer, in whose service a stop at every house was not unusual, and our coachman shewed that he had not much power to dissuade him from the practice. It unfortunately increased as we proceeded further, and the want of skill of our coachman, though he wielded a great whip with both his hands, made our journey uncomfortable, and decided us to have a postillion for the leaders on our return.

From the little town of Aramits we began to ascend, and had a sharp hill before reaching Lannes. The scenery, though not of a grand character, is picturesque; and as the meadows had been lately cut, looked dressed and pretty. Lannes is about half way to Troisvilles.

From the height beyond Lannes, which separates it from the Valley of Montori, the view is very beautiful; the mountains, though free

from snow, are of a bold character, and an abrupt rock, the bank of which is covered with trees and verdure, is a striking object. Fern grows abundantly on all the hills. We had a long descent to a broken bridge, passed through the village of Montori, and soon after reached Tardets.

It was market-day, and, as usual in all this country, the streets were crowded. Grain of various kinds, cattle, and pigs, seemed the chief articles. Then there were stalls for shoes, bread and a kind of cake, bacon and cheese, ribbons and tapes floating in the air from a frame, ornaments, crosses, beads, &c. After leaving Tardets, we kept along the right bank of the Saissons, and in a few minutes reached our destination. M. and Madame de M—— R—— received us most kindly.

Monday, September 6.—*Troisvilles.*—This old chateau was built in the reign of Louis XIII., by an ancestor of the present possessor, a valorous-looking Count de Montreal, whose portrait hangs in the dining-room. He is dressed in blue armour, with red satin stockings, and fine lace ruffles round his knees. It is a most pleasant house : my bed-room, where I am now

writing, has three large windows, and the little dressing-room another—all looking different ways, each commanding different views, and all lovely. Last night, the clear southern moon lighted up the landscape, shining on the distant mountains, and causing the old terraces and fine avenue close under my windows to glow with that sort of warm, romantic hue which seems much more fitted for lovers' serenades, than can be imagined by those who have experienced only the cold, religious light shed by our northern moons.

The village church is close by; and yesterday morning the chime of a most harmonious peal of bells enticed me to the window; and there I saw the peasants, in their gayest attire, going to the early mass. A most cheerful group they were. And after service was over, some lingered under the lime avenue, and some walked along the terraces and flower gardens of the chateau: under those trees they have their village fêtes—it is there they dance, and sing, and play at nine pins, between the house of prayer and the dwelling of their Seigneur—the priest standing by, and the lord of the soil and his guests looking on. But the peasant's mirth

is innocent—he is enjoying the day of rest in the manner he has been taught to think right; and the presence of the priest, his Maker's representative, and the smiles of his temporal master, the good-natured owner of the chateau, only add to his delight.

And thus yesterday was passed; the melodious bells calling several times a happy population to come and give thanks to the Author of their blessings, and pray for a continuance of them; and some who, from recent affliction or illness, could not afterwards participate in the gay dance or merry games, remained in the house of God, whose doors are ever open, and whose decorated altars are always ready for the suppliant's prayer.

The Duchesse de Berri once breakfasted on the terrace of this chateau, under a fine large oak, which had adorned the grounds even long before the castle was built—a venerable contemporary of Francois I., and under whose pleasant shade the brave gentleman in blue armour and lace knee-ruffles may have often luxuriated. This aristocratic tree, which may have existed, for aught we know, in the time of a still more remote ancestor of this family,

the Count de Montreal, who possessed that venerable castle of Urtubi, near Urugne, when Louis XI. had his interview there with the Kings of Aragon and Castile; this tree, called in its latter days "the Duchesse de Berri's Oak," was, during the eventful month of July, 1830, struck by lightning, and totally destroyed!

One of the village dances here represents a history of the renowned Roland and his horse. The most active of the men is dressed so as to represent a horse, with iron-bound shoes on his hands and feet; he kicks and plunges to prevent the others from coming near, while they are to try and catch him. All this pantomime is danced to a wild air, and whoever succeeds in catching the formidable horse, becomes the Roland of the fête, and receives the prize.

We do not reckon the French a comfortable nation, they had however very good ideas of comfort, even in the time of Louis XIII. Nothing can be more luxurious and enjoyable than this chateau, and yet it has been very little altered since that time—far more advanced in luxury than our edifices of that period, though this climate would seem to require less than ours. Most of the family pictures were burnt

by the enraged peasants at the revolution, and the house was greatly injured, the furniture all destroyed, and the hall converted into a bake-house for the troops. M. de M—— R—— has repaired it, and will soon have the place in very nice order. It is now a very comfortable house. Luckily, the portrait of that Count de Troisvilles who built this house escaped; the same who endeavoured to destroy Richelieu by obtaining a written order from Louis XIII., but was not able. Among the few other portraits which escaped, is an original one of Louis XIV., when a child, with rosy cheeks and point ruff; the others are the old Duchesse de Berri, daughter of the Regent Orleans; and the young Bourbon King of Spain, which was painted when he passed by here to take possession of his kingdom.

I like the French style of living—the dejeuner à la fourchette at eleven, gives a long independent morning. We had some tea, at eight, in our room, and at eleven went down to an excellent breakfast. The situation of Troisvilles is very pretty, having the advantage of the river and its fertile banks of wood, and a number of undulating heights, backed by mountains. M. de M—— R—— has planted a good deal, the

walks are well kept, and as he now principally resides here, he will continue to improve it.

Soon after leaving Oleron, we quitted Bearn, and entered Basque—the languages are totally different, the Basque being very peculiar. There are in it indications which would seem to point out the period when this country was occupied by the English—for instance, this morning a party of villagers were playing at ball near the house—a game at which they are expert; I was surprised to hear the player, who gave out the ball, do so precisely as in England, first saying—"Play." I found afterwards, it is not a Basque word; and is only used to call attention to the game. It must have remained from the old time when the English possessed this part of the country. An English name is also given to a mixture which is looked upon as a restorative—the remains of the buillon is mixed with wine, and so drank; this draught is considered very strengthening after fatigue, and is called "good health."

We drove to-day, in an open carriage, to Mauleon, which lies about five or six miles down the valley—a very pretty drive. Unluckily, the day was not fine, and a shower came on just

as we got there, which prevented us from going up to the old castle, now a prison—the view from which, in fine weather, must be very good. Mauleon is an interesting town of great antiquity, and stood several memorable sieges in the wars of our Black Prince. It has one of those curious old churches, said to have been built by the Templars, and which are common in this country. They have a singular tower, terminating in three rounded projections: below them is a kind of shed where the bells are kept, and the eastern extremity is circular.

At Mauleon we saw an old mansion-house, of considerable size, ornamented with fine carving, in a very good style. It is occupied by a family, who a few days ago narrowly escaped destruction during a storm; the lightning struck the hall, where they were at dinner, injured the building, but providentially hurt nobody. I took a sketch of Mauleon from the road leading to Navareins, and one of Troisvilles, on our return.

Many of the peasants here, and in the rest of the Pyrenees, are proprietors; those who are tenants are so at will: six months' notice on either side, will break the connexion; the land-

lord receives half the crop. After breakfast to-day, we took a walk to the other side of the River Saissons: crossing the river by a nervous bridge for a carriage, for it was very narrow, and without any guard: we then ascended the stream, and had a pretty view of the château, backed by woods, and graceful heights. We crossed the river again, and had a beautiful view of Tardets. It is an old bourg, and some of its inhabitants, though differing, neither in expenditure nor appearance, from their neighbours, are very rich—worth 150,000 or 200,000 francs. We went into the church, a small, ancient building, which was formerly a chapel to a chateau which stood on an adjoining hill, where the vineyard is now. It belonged, I think, to a Count Wirtemburg, a branch of the Montmorency family. We met the curé, who removed a curtain to shew us the picture of a Magdalene, which appeared well painted: it is by a Spanish master, and has in the corner the Montmorency arms. He complained sadly of the inadequacy of the church to the present population; and, indeed, the most curious thing about it is the way in which galleries have been piled one on the other, to give more room. We had a very pleasant walk, and

after an excellent dinner at six o'clock, had some chess and music in the evening.

There is a curious tradition that the round, isolated mountain, which stands up the valley near this place, is hollow, and that once there existed through it a secret passage into Spain.

CHAPTER XIV.

Excursion to the Vallée d'Aspe—Return to Pau.

Oleron, Tuesday, Sept. 7th.—Left our pleasant friends and their lovely abode at Troisvilles, and returned to our comfortable apartments and smiling host at the Hotel Condesse. Our drive here was beautiful, but I was far from well, and therefore only half enjoyed it. As we passed through Sainte Marie, we stopped to see the church, which is remarkable for its rich ornaments. I afterwards heard that the church of Sainte Marie is also famous for the richly-embroidered vestments of the priests. We saw some ill-executed reliefs on the altars, particularly one in the right aisle from the entrance; these are richly gilt, as are some statues; but nothing in good taste. The extreme heat, and

a swelled face, threatened again to prevent our long-intended visit to the Valley of Aspe. However, when W. awoke me the next morning at five o'clock to know how I was, the swelling being better, I muttered a half-sleepy assent to the proposed expedition, and by seven we were in a little rough carriage, with two lively horses, driven by a fat coachman, and on the high road to Spain.

The scenery is different from any we have seen, being a succession of small, crooked valleys, divided by very narrow defiles. The road to the Vallée d'Aspe is in general excellent; and beyond Bidous great improvements are taking place, with a view of making by this route a carriage communication between Paris and Madrid: this would be realizing a project of Napoleon's, and would be much shorter than those by Bayonne and Perpignan. After leaving Oleron, instead of ascending the paved hill of St. Marie, we turned to the left, and kept along the Gave in front of the new Séminaire, and entered a rich plain; met abundance of carts drawn by bullocks, and numbers of people on the road, many coming to the fair of Oleron, which is to take place to-morrow, and at which a great number of horses are sold. Arras is a

pretty village, and commands a good view; but that descending to the river, opposite to the village of Escot, is still finer; a lofty, rocky outline, and the nearer heights covered with fern, now in some patches beginning to assume its autumn tint. The farmers are busily employed getting in their second crop of hay; this gives a dressed appearance to the fields, and was peculiarly striking to-day, as rocks partially covered with wood are of frequent occurrence, and rising from the brilliant green meadows, they have a look of refinement, as if they were thus arranged to ornament pleasure grounds.

There was great variety in our drive to-day. After leaving the plain of Oleron, we had a succession of three or four valleys—each with its narrow entrance—sometimes so narrow that nature made a passage only for the torrent, and art, by cutting through the rock, has added the road. As we descended to the Pont d'Escot, a curious conical lime-stone rock occurs so close to the road, that part of it was cut away to allow room to pass. Near the Pont d'Escot, the road has been greatly improved, so that the Roman inscription which once stood above is now on a level with the traveller. The upper part of the inscription appears to be in its original state, and

is almost illegible; the lower part looks as if it had been retouched. I copied part of it, as fol- follows:—

"L. Valærius Ger
11 vir bis hanc
Viam restituit
Qui ami . . . . . .
amicus."

The number of beggars, making a sad display of their infirmities, shews that this must be a very frequented route. After crossing the bridge, the drive is beautiful: we passed a small bathing establishment, frequented, as I heard, only by the lower class; and a paper manufactory, worked by a stream close to its source,—such is the force with which it rises within a few yards of the Gave.

We again crossed a bridge, to reach another valley, and ascended to the little town of Sarance, whose church possesses an image of great sanctity, and which was, in former times, of sufficient celebrity to obtain a visit from Louis XI. I rather think the image must be in a small chapel near the road: many people were kneeling before it. The road continued to follow the windings of the Gave, and the narrow valleys full of beauty. Before reaching Bidous, we left

the river, to ascend a hill, and at its top, and immediately before entering the town, had a good view of the Valley d'Aspe, properly so called, which for beauty is much inferior to the narrow valleys that, on either side, give access to it. It contains a number of villages, and therefore for its limited extent must have a great population. The mountain outline is fine, but the valley itself is bare of trees. It contains six or seven villages in its limited space, and in early times, before its union with Bearn, was a little republic.

We stopped at the inn, which is not in any way attractive, but as it has a reputation far beyond that of Urdoz, we may conclude the latter to be very bad. The heat had been great this morning, and increased as we advanced; but the drive beyond Bidous was beautiful—superior in grandeur of feature to the approach on the other side. We continued in the flat valley by an excellent road to beyond Accous; which is the largest village in the valley, and, I think, existed in the time of the Romans. It was the birth-place of Despourrins, to whose memory an obelisk has lately been erected, in a good situation, on a green height overlooking the village.

The mountain outline is very fine, particularly

above Accous. We soon after approached the termination of the valley: as at Pierrefitte and other places, the rock projected so far as barely to allow a passage for the Gave, and a very narrow and bad road; now an excellent one is nearly finished, which, by blasting away the rock and building over the torrent, has been made sufficiently wide. Near it is a curious old bridge, the Pont de Lescun, very steep, and without a parapet: it leads to the villages of Lees and Osse; the latter lies nearly opposite to Bidous, and is remarkable for having its population half protestant and half catholic, yet living together in perfect harmony. What a blessing it would be if they could give Ireland the receipt!

We advanced, and passed on our right, on the other side of the Gave, the Valley of Lescun, terminated by a fine height, and is said to have a cascade of considerable beauty. As we advanced, the valley behind us seemed shut in by a great fortified height—the perpendicular rock rising abruptly from the woods, which cover the mountains below. It has a similar effect as the formation about Les Eaux Chaudes. In this narrow valley, irrigation is well managed by canals, at different heights along the Gave.

We passed through the village of Eigun, with the smaller one of Cette above us, and arrived to within half an hour of the Portalet, and three-quarters from Urdos, when the heat fairly drove us back. The Portalet, a passage between two rocks, is said to be curious, and the road, so far as we went, is excellent, and is, of the mountain approaches to Spain, the best, and the longest way practicable for a carriage.

On our return, the grand line of rock resembling a fortification was finely before us. We stopped at Bedous for dinner, which was, all things considered, better than we expected; and afterwards, paid a visit to Madame G——, of whom our amiable little bookseller at Oleron had spoken to us: her garden is rather pretty, and commands a good view of the valley. It was nearly half-past four when we started on our return, and had a delicious cool drive, enjoying still more, perhaps, than in the morning, that beautiful part of it between Sarance and the Pont d'Escot. The comforts of our inn at Oleron were quite wanting to me, who had suffered much with a headache during the whole drive. I laid down on the sofa, and thought of all the beautiful scenery we had passed through.

On reflection, the chief features of the Valley d'Aspe seem to be sloping lawns interspersed with forest trees, sometimes rising to the summit of heights which though lofty are not so uncomfortably perpendicular as those of the Hautes Pyrenees, and yet they are by no means deficient in boldness.

Pau, Thursday, Sept. 9th.—There was a fair this morning at Oleron. We left it about nine o'clock, in great confusion, and arrived here at twelve, in great heat. On leaving Oleron, we met crowds of people and cattle flocking into it, for the fair. The view of the mountains on our right very fine. After continuing for some time in a varied and pretty country, we ascended a long hill, and enjoyed from its summit a fine view of the mountains on the right, and over a richly-cultivated country, dotted with habitations, on the left. At Gau, we joined the Eaux Bonnes road, and soon afterwards reached Pau, and fortunately found rooms vacant at the Hotel de France—rather an unusual event at this season of the year. The day was cloudy, but this evening disclosed the mountains in all their beauty, and from the terrace walk we saw the sun set on each succeeding height. The band played, and

we walked up and down the promenade, enjoying the pleasure of meeting some kind friends whom we rejoiced to see again.

Saturday, Sept. 11th.—The weather is intensely hot; it has been most oppressive since our arrival. I feel so imbued with heat that I cannot fancy I can ever be cool again. The first day of it was luxurious, and I enjoyed the sort of impossible-to-do-anything, darkened-room life, which we led; but it is now getting serious, and the impossibility to stir out till night has in some measure cooled the scorching ground, becomes very annoying.

Sunday, 12th.—Pau.—Still hotter than ever; I can scarcely move, and am kept a closer prisoner by the sun than we were, on our former visit here in July, by the rain. After sun-set, however, we have contrived to visit the beautiful old castle, of which I have said very little; but it has been so fully described by every one who has written on the Pyrenees, and its historical recollections are so well known, it would be useless to repeat them; particularly as we intend to see Foix—the ancient town from which the monarchs of Bearn originally came; and though still more interesting, and far more ancient, it

appears to be very rarely visited by tourists. When we arrive within its ancient walls, I shall endeavour to describe it, and insert some interesting quotations relating to its former celebrated inhabitants.

A pleasant party at Miss F——'s, Saturday. Met two Spaniards who sang very well—one, a priest, of whom we heard the interesting trait, that he gave up some scholars to whom he was teaching Spanish to a poor Carlist colonel, because he had a wife and large family.

We have arranged to start for St. Gaudens to-morrow, and intend to proceed afterwards by St G irons and Foix to Ax, in the Eastern Pyrenees. We shall leave Pau with great regret; its recollection must always be endeared to us, from the many kind friends it contains, and from the great kindness and hospitality we have received.

CHAPTER XV.

Tarbes—St. Gaudens—St. Girons—Foix, and its ancient castle—Journey to Ax.

Saturday, September 18th.—Ax.—A little unfrequented bathing-place in the Eastern Pyrenees, three days journey to the south-east of Pau. Last year I made up my mind that it was very foolish to travel *northwards* in search of health, pleasure, or amusement; and now I am come to the same conclusion, and still more strongly with regard to the south. I cannot imagine how the sudden and violent changes of this climate can do good to any one; and so far from my spirits being elated or soothed, they were never so depressed, or in such a painfully irritable state. So much for southern suns!

After our long residence at the baths, I was pleased with Oleron, as a permanently inhabited town, a place occupied during the summer season only, has always a melancholy effect on

me—I cannot help thinking how sad it must look in winter, when every one is gone.

The air feels pleasanter here than in any place we have visited since Paris; and the face of the country all the way from St. Gaudens has soothed and gratified me. The buildings, costume, and country present a new aspect, and, just now, one of great singularity. The plains are occupied by large fields of sarazin, now "white for harvest." Above these, the dark vines and their purple fruit are festooned from one tree to the other, which, for this purpose, are planted in long rows, so that at a distance they resemble immense bridges or aqueducts thrown over great lakes and rivers.

The towns, perched on rocky, conical heights, are generally surmounted by the ruins of an old castle, and surrounded by venerable walls crumbling to decay. They tell the imagination many a tale of past grandeur, and feats of arms, in the romantic by-gone days of chivalry. All these towns, particularly Foix, have a grander and more ancient aristocratic look than those of the Western Pyrenees, not excepting Pau itself; but then they bear fewer marks of *present* affluence and prosperity.

The population here looks more Spanish, and

the round berret of Bearn and the Pays Basque is replaced by a long, hanging lilac cap, something like the Catalonian. The men wear a light-blue coat, generally suspended over one shoulder; women, close-coloured caps, trimmed with a row of lace put plain round the edge, which has rather a pretty effect.

On arriving at Ax, we were in despair at the extreme dirtiness of both hotels, but with a little perseverance we succeeded in getting tolerable lodgings. After a late breakfast or early dinner, a kind of dejeuné dinatoire, furnished by a most civil, bowing traiteur, I mounted a donkey, and we set off on the road towards Spain. Near the town are some interesting old castles, attributed to the Romans; but, before I say anything more of this place, I will give the notes I made in the carriage during our three days' journey from Pau to Ax.

We left Pau on Thursday, at a quarter before five—a beautiful starlight morning. Our road lay over part of the extensive lande called le Pont Long. In part of this, Henry IV. stuck in a bog, whilst snipe-shooting. How familiar this sounds, and how vividly does it set before us the every-day life of former days! Had we passed the winter here, very possibly, a similar

occurrence might have happened to W——. The road is quite flat, and is shaded with fine chesnuts and oaks. The mountain range unfortunately became gradually clouded, and this interfered with the complete enjoyment of the noble view of the plain of Tarbes and its outlines, with the village of Bios and its fine church in the fore-ground. We drove slowly, so that it took us four hours to reach Tarbes. We were recommended to go to the Hôtel de l'Europe, but I must say that the Hôtel de la Paix seems by far the better house. Crowds of country people were flocking in for the fair, which is to take place to-day, so that Tarbes was seen to advantage; it is a large place: we went to see its cathedral, which is remarkable for six very fine marble pillars which support the canopy over the high altar.

At Tarbes, Froissart says he was very comfortable at the Hotel of the Star, and remained there the whole day, "for it was a commodious place, and has a handsome river." Edward the Black Prince, and his wife, visited the Count of Armagnac at his court here; and the persuasion of the Princess of Wales caused the Count of Foix, who came to pay his respects to her, to do

a generous act, of which Froissart gives an interesting account.*

A long stage to Lannes Mazan—thirty-three kilometres, (upwards of twenty English miles,) between five and six of which were in the

* During the time the Prince and Princess of Wales were at Tarbes, the Count was in his town of Pau, erecting a handsome castle adjoining to the outskirts of the town, and on the river Gave.

As soon as he was informed of the arrival of the Prince and Princess at Tarbes, he made his preparations, and visited them in great state, accompanied by upwards of six hundred horse and sixty knights. They were much pleased at his visit, and entertained him handsomely, as he was well deserving of it; and the Princess paid him the most engaging attentions. The Count d'Armagnac and the Lord d'Albreth were present, and the Prince was entreated to request the Count de Foix to release the Count from all or part of what he was indebted to him for his ransom.

The Prince, being a prudent as well as a valiant man, having considered awhile, said he would not do so, and added: "Count d'Armagnac, you were made prisoner by fair deeds of arms, and in open battle; you put our cousin, the Count de Foix, his person, and his men, to the hazard of the fight; and if fortune has been favourable to him and adverse to you, he ought not to fare the worse for it. Neither my lord and father nor myself would have thanked you if you had entreated us to give back what we had honourably and fortunately won at the battle of Poitiers, for which we return thanks to the Lord God." The Count d'Armagnac, on hearing this, was quite thunderstruck; and, notwithstanding he had failed in his expectations, he made a similar request

plain; and in clear weather the view of the chain of mountains, particularly of the Pic du Midi, must be very good; but now, alas! all was in obscurity, and so far as we were this day concerned, it were as good that the great pic had never been; to us, the landscape, deprived of its chief ornament, was reduced to the beauties of wood and cultivation. From the plain we had a

to the Princess, who cheerfully entreated the Count de Foix to grant her a boon.

"Madam," replied the Count, "I am but a small gentleman, and an insignificant bachelor, therefore I cannot make large gifts; but if the boon you request do not exceed sixty thousand francs, I grant it." The Princess was anxious to gain the whole; but the Count, being a wary man, paid much attention to all his personal affairs; besides, he suspected this boon regarded the ransom of the Count d'Armagnac. He therefore continued—"Madam, for a poor knight like me, who am building towns and castles, the gift I offer you ought to suffice."

When the Princess found she could not gain more, she said, "Count de Foix, I request and entreat you would forgive the Count d'Armagnac."

"Madam," answered the Count, "I ought to comply with your request. I have said, that if the boon you solicited did not exceed sixty thousand francs I would grant it. The Count d'Armagnac owes me two hundred and fifty thousand, and at your entreaty I give you sixty thousand of them."

Thus ended the matter; and the Count d'Armagnac, by the Princess's entreaty, gained sixty thousand francs. The Count de Foix, shortly afterwards, returned to his own country.

long ascent, having a fine oak wood, occupying the ravine on the right; the road still crowded with men, women, oxen, sheep, carts, horses, and donkeys, hurrying to the fair. The red capulet is again prevalent; but the brown berret of the men is now giving place to the hat.

After an hour and a half's drive, passed through a large bourg, Tournay; and here the secondary heights become more picturesque; the road itself is good, but hilly. Passed the village of la Nespede, near which are the baths of Accabert, which are said to be very efficacious, and where Lady W—— is staying. After the twenty-fifth kilometre, we had a steep and long ascent, to reach Malvoisin, the old castle about which Froissart tells a romantic story. This led us to a plateau of some extent covered with fern, where the Bagneres de Luchon road joins this, and we soon after reached the station. We were three hours and fifty minutes en route, and had to wait nearly an hour for horses, and then started, with the postmaster as postboy, who, however, would not undertake to manage the four horses, so we were obliged to get another driver for the leaders; but they got on famously by an almost flat road—the table land I before noticed, to Montrejean.

To-day, the clouds completely obscured the mountains, even St. Bertrand de Comminges was scarcely visible. Immediately below the hill of Montrejean the roads again separated—that of Luchon turning to the right to cross the Garonne, we kept along the left bank, and generally by a flat road. A fine view from an ascent before we reached St. Gaudens: the Garonne, and the small town of St. Valentine below. St. Gaudens is an old, irregularly built town; it was crowded with people, as all these towns are on a market day, but otherwise appeared uninteresting; we stopped at an uncomfortable large inn—I think the Hotel de France. The road will be much improved by a new passage which is now being made, avoiding the narrow streets of the town.

We started at a quarter after six. Another cloudy day,—a comfort, as to feeling, with the recollection of the heat of Pau; but it deprives our drive of much of its enjoyment, by concealing the distant mountains. Road very flat through the valley of the Garonne. A highly-cultivated plain on our right; a range of low and wooded heights its opposite boundary: then more lofty ones, and probably beyond them the Maledetta range; but to-day this is conjecture. After three-quarters of an hour, saw a fine ruin

of a castle situated on a mound on the right bank of the river, which put me in mind of Froissart's description, and of the conversation he had with his friend while riding along this road.* The country people are now busily employed in ploughing. A very rude process — a pair of oxen draw the diminutive plough, which the ploughman directs with one hand, and holds a long stick in the other to guide the oxen. I saw to-day three pairs working three ploughs in the same furrow. We had a sick horse— changing him, to act as leader, caused some delay.

We then descended to a lower level, and con-

* He says—"As we were walking among these towns and castles, in a beautiful meadow, by the side of the Garonne, the Knight said, 'Sir John, I have witnessed here many excellent skirmishes and combats between the Armagnacs and the Foixiens; for there was neither town nor castle that was not well garrisoned with men-at-arms, who engaged with and pursued each other. Do you see yonder those ruins?—they are the remains of a fort which the Armagnacs raised against those two castles, which they filled with men-at-arms, who did much damage to the lands of the Count de Foix, on the other side of the river, but I will tell you how they paid for it. The Count de Foix, one night, sent his brother, Sir Peter de Béarn, with two hundred lances and four hundred peasants, laden with faggots and as much wood as they could cut from the hedges, which they piled around this fort and set on fire, so that the fort was burnt and all in it, for none received quarter, and since that time no one has dared to rebuild it.'"

tinued in it to Lestelles: where are the ruins of a castle, and beyond it saw two others. A number of excellent farm-houses scattered over the country and along the road. We now left the flat, and, ascending, reached a pass, where a projecting line of rock has been blasted to make room for the road, and further widening and improvement is now being done. The view of the river, and a house with plantations on a height overhanging it on the opposite side is very pretty. At Martory, we left the direct road to Toulouse, and crossed the Garonne, by a bridge which has a kind of triumphal arch upon it. A long and steep hill brought us to Montsaunes, where is a very curious old church, with the triple-headed steeple, like those in the Valley of Mauleon, attributed to the Knights Templars.

There is a road to St. Beat on the right. On the left is Salies, a large bourg, with a ruined castle. At Mane, the station, we forded a tributary of the Salat: here, opposite the post, is a fine elm, said to have been planted at the birth of Henry IV. We were now in the valley of the Salat—it lay to our left. The country is rich and cultivated, covered with vines festooned to standards over fields of sarazin, a very useful grain, as it is often sown after the rye or corn

has been cut, and ripens before winter. At a distance, its white flower looks like water, and the rows of vines like rows of arches. A very Italian-looking place, on a commanding, conical height at Prat.

St. Lizier, on the Salat, is very picturesque, partly on the height above the river, and enclosed with a very ancient-looking wall, and remains of towers. An old church and towers crown the whole. One of the towers is of an octagon form, and seems built of marble. There is a steep bridge over the river. We kept on the left bank, and soon reached St. Girons, an ancient place, whose principal attraction to us was an excellent déjeuné à la fourchette, à l'Hotel de France. We were a great curiosity to the worthy St. Gironites, and the children were in ecstasies at seeing themselves reflected in our rumble. Whilst breakfast was preparing, we walked on the promenade, and to the principal church. some gaudy altars, but I saw nothing remarkable. Pigs and geese are the chief commodities: the geese are fatted to a great size.

The Valley of the Salat is said to be very interesting: Seix is a small town in it, and, from its commerce with Spain, of some importance. Near

it are the ruins of the fine Castle de la Garde, one of those destroyed by the policy of Richelieu, in the reign of Louis XIII. Mont Valier is a fine height, near the extremity of this valley, more than 8500 feet high, from whence the view is said to be of great beauty, so that, altogether, the Valley of the Salat is well worthy of a visit.

Though on leaving St. Girons, we left the Valley of the Salat, we still continued in beautiful scenery, and, about two hours' drive from St. Girons, reached a pretty chateau, belonging to the Marquise de Castelnan, backed with wood; near it is another handsome castle, and a third on the summit of a wooded height. The character of this scenery is a succession of wooded elevations, many of them crowned with a dwelling, one of those substantial farm-houses which are general in this country.

La Bestide de Serons an interesting old place, is situated on the Arise, and partly built on the side of a rocky height. Its old wall, tall houses, open galleries, and flat-tiled roofs, give it a southern and picturesque air. Near it is the ruin of an old tower, called the Tour de Loup, with which a curious story is connected.

Gaston X., Count de Foix, had been for some

time married to a young lady who was only fourteen, when he was summoned by Philip le Bel to march with his contingent of troops, and join his sovereign. At the court he was captivated by Jeanne d'Artois, the niece of the King; but his marriage seemed an insurmountable barrier to wishes which he could not conceal.

"Never mind," said Philip; "you shall marry my niece."

"But the Pope will never consent," replied Gaston.

"Leave that to me," said the King; "depend upon it, you shall marry my niece."

The unfortunate young Countess, when she heard of this affair, immediately informed Pope Boniface VIII. of it, and implored his interference, who instantly issued a bull of excommunication against any priest who should marry Gaston to any other woman during the life-time of his wife.

"In spite of all this," said Philip, "my niece shall marry the Count de Foix."

So he sent for the Count and his niece, and conducted them to the chapel, where he summoned his grand almoner, whom he thus addressed:

"Here," said he, "is the altar, at which you must marry this young couple; and there is a

gallows, on which you shall be hanged, if you refuse."

The marriage took place. Some months after, the Count returned to Foix with Jeanne d'Artois, when his unfortunate first wife, in order to escape the persecutions of her rival, was obliged to quit her castle, and take refuge in the Tour de Loup, where she gave birth to a son, who was called Loup, because he was born on that saint's day. There the poor Countess remained, entirely devoted to the education of her son, until she could inhabit the Monastery of Salanques, which Gaston built for her, near the little town of Des Bordes, and of which she was the first abbess. Her son laid claim to the County of Foix, and though Philip refused to acknowledge his pretensions, yet he gave him great possessions.

Between the sixth and seventh kilometre from Foix, we ascended, and a valley of a larger character opened on us. After passing a curious rock we reached the Col des Bouches, and had a long and sharp descent into the valley of the Ariège. I have seldom seen anything so beautiful as the first glimpse we obtained of this valley, with the ancient town of Foix situated in the centre. Its most picturesque castle, as we approached, was seen to peculiar advantage,—

strongly lighted by a beam of the setting sun, which, issuing from beneath a cloud, fell alone upon the castle, whilst all the rest of the picture was in shade. On approaching nearer, we had a still finer view of the castle and its three towers, perched immediately above the town on a conical and rocky height, at the base of which flows the Ariège. A handsome bridge adds to the beauty of the scene; and, on the left, there is an elevation of far greater magnitude, surmounted by the ruins of a chapel.

We crossed the bridge, from whence the views are extremely picturesque, and drove to the Hotel de la Poste. An ill-looking, lame woman led the way into a dark and dirty passage, into which some rooms opened; but they looked so uncomfortable, and the whole concern was so repulsive, that we went to reconnoitre another inn opposite the bridge, which proved to be not only decidedly better than its rival of the "Poste," but really a very tolerable inn. Our lame acquaintance wanted eight francs for her dirty rooms: the host of the Rocher de Foix let us have his, far better rooms, for five francs: so that we were, in every way, gainers. We then went out to explore, and had a very interesting ramble.

Foix is a very ancient town; some give it a Grecian origin, attributing its foundation to the Phocians: it certainly existed in the fifth century, and its Counts were celebrated for their valour, magnificence, and wealth. In 1457, Gaston de Foix gave a magnificent fête, on the marriage of Magdelaine, the daughter of Charles VII., to Ladislas, King of Hungary. This fête is said to have cost 5000 crowns. In 1432, Gaston IV., by his marriage with Eleonore de Navarre, the heiress of that kingdom, became King of Navarre. François Phœbus died without children, and left the County of Foix to Catherine, his sister, who married Jean d'Albert, in 1488, and thus began the third dynasty. Jeanne d'Albert, the daughter of Henry of Navarre, married Antoine de Bourbon, and the fourth dynasty, thus commenced, ended by the union of the kingdom with France, in 1620, under Louis XIII. No traces of these celebrated men remain, except their castle, and that is now a prison; but, notwithstanding its present degradation, we gazed with great interest on the old walls.

I will quote, or rather abridge, Froissart's romantic account of the celebrated Count de Foix's murder of his own son:—

Gaston Phœbus, Count de Foix, had married

Agnes, the sister of the King of Navarre. Gaston had made prisoner the Lord of Albreth, but, by the intercession of Agnes and the King of Navarre, restored his prisoner to liberty on the promise of the payment of fifty thousand crowns, which was guaranteed by the King of Navarre; to whom the Lord of Albreth paid the money, but who refused to pay it over, on the pretence that Gaston Phœbus owed a similar sum, for his wife's dower.

This breach of trust exasperated Phœbus against his wife and her brother, and he despatched her to the court of Navarre, to endeavour, by a personal interview, to obtain redress. She, however, failed in her endeavours, and, fearing the anger of her husband, resolved not to return. Gaston had one son by Agnes; he was named after his father, and, as Froissart says, "grew up, and became a fine young gentleman," and "the youth might be about fifteen or sixteen years old. He was a very handsome figure, and the exact resemblance of his father in his whole form."

He took it into his head to make a journey into Navarre, to visit his mother and uncle; but it was an unfortunate journey for him and for this country. The King entertained him well,

and detained him upwards of ten days. On his departure he made him handsome presents, and did the same by his attendants. The last gift the King gave him was the cause of his death, and I will tell you how it happened.

As the youth was on the point of setting out, the king took him privately into his chamber and gave him a bag full of powder, which was of such pernicious quality as would cause the death of any one that ate of it. "Gaston, my dear nephew," said the King, "will you do what I am about to tell you? You see how unjustly the Count de Foix hates your mother, who being my sister, it displeases me as much as it should you. If you wish to reconcile your father to your mother, you must take a small pinch of this powder, and, when you see a proper opportunity, strew it over the meat destined for your father's table; but take care no one sees you. The instant he shall have tasted it, he will be impatient for his wife, your mother, to return to him: and they will love each other henceforward so strongly they will never again be separated. You ought to be anxious to see this accomplished. Do not tell it to any one; for, if you do, it will lose its effect."

The youth, who believed everything his uncle, the King of Navarre, had told him, replied, he would cheerfully do as he had said; and on this he departed from Pampeluna, on his return to Orthès. His father, the Count de Foix, received him with pleasure, and asked what was the news in Navarre, and what presents and jewels had been given him? He replied, "Very handsome ones;" and shewed them all, except the bag which contained the powder. Gaston got information that his son carried a bag fastened inside his dress, and his suspicions were excited.

Then continues Froissart:—

His son Gaston always placed the dishes before him, and tasted the meats. As soon as he had served the first dish, and done what was usual, the Count cast his eyes on him, having formed his plan, and saw the strings of the bag hanging from his pourpoint. This sight made his blood boil, and he said, "Gaston, come hither; I want to whisper you something!" The youth advanced to the table, when the Count, opening his bosom, undid his pourpoint, and with his knife cut away the bag.

The young man was thunderstruck, and said

not a word, but turned pale with fear, and began to tremble exceedingly; for he was conscious he had done wrong. The Count opened the bag, took some of the powder, which he strewed over a slice of bread, and, calling a dog to him, gave it him to eat. The instant the dog had eaten a morsel his eyes rolled round in his head, and he died. The Count, on this, was very wroth. The first words he uttered were in Gascon.

"Ho, Gaston, thou traitor! for thee, and to increase thy inheritance which would have come to thee, have I made war, and incurred the hatred of the kings of France, England, Spain, Navarre, and Aragon, and have borne myself valiantly against them, and thou wishest to murder me! Thy disposition must be imfamously bad; know, therefore, thou shalt die with this blow;" and leaping over the table with a knife in his hand, he would have slain him. But the knights and esquires interfered, and on their knees said to him, with tears, "Ah, ah! my lord, for Heaven's sake do not kill Gaston; you have no other child. Let him be confined, and inquire further into the business; perhaps he was ignorant what was in the bag, and may therefore be blameless."

"Well," replied the Count, "let him be confined in the dungeon, but so safely guarded that he may be forthcoming."

It appears that the Count still nourished deadly feelings against his son; he caused many of his followers to be put to the torture and to death, and summoned the nobles and prelates of Foix and Bearn, with the view of obtaining their sanction for his execution, but they objected.

In the catastrophe, Froissart's informant evidently wishes to soften the reality as much as possible, and endeavours to attribute it more to accident than design. It appears that for ten days the young man refused to take food; this was discovered by an attendant, who informed the Count.

The narrative thus continues:—

On hearing this, the Count was enraged, and, without saying a word, left his apartment, and went to the prison of his son. In an evil hour he had in his hand a knife, with which he had been paring and cleaning his nails; he held it by the blade so closely that scarcely the thickness of a groat appeared of the point, when, pushing aside the tapestry that covered the entrance of the prison, through ill luck he hit his

son on a vein of his throat, as he uttered, "Ha, traitor! why dost not thou eat?" and instantly left the room, without saying or doing anything more.

The youth was much frightened at his father's arrival, and, withal, exceeding weak from fasting. The point of the knife, small as it was, cut a vein, which as soon as he felt he turned himself on one side and died.

The Count had barely got back again to his apartment, when the attendant of his son came and said, "My lord, Gaston is dead!"

"Dead!" cried the Count.

"Yes, God help me—indeed he is, my lord."

The Count would not believe it, and sent one of his knights to see.

The knight, on his return, confirmed the news. The Count was now bitterly affected, and cried out—"Ha, ha, Gaston! what a sorry business has this turned out for thee and me! In an evil hour, didst thou go to visit thy mother in Navarre. Never shall I again enjoy the happiness I had formerly."

He then ordered his barber to be sent for, and was shaven quite bare. He clothed himself, as well as his whole household, in black. The body

of the youth was borne, with tears and lamentations, to the church of the Augustin friars at Orthès, where it was buried.

This celebrated Gaston Phœbus, whose reputation acquired for him the title of the Louis XIV. of Bearn, had a chequered character of great qualities and great vices. A beautiful trait is related of a descendant of his, who, however, did not live to obtain an earthly crown. This was Francois Phœbus, the nephew of Louis XI., who died at the age of sixteen years, and who, when on his death-bed, turned to his afflicted attendants, and said, "Grieve not, my friends, I go to my Father! My kingdom is not of this world."

But the name of Gaston, connected with the house of Foix, was rendered still more illustrious in the person of Gaston de Foix, Duc de Nemours. He was the son of Jean de Foix, and of Marie d'Orleans, the sister of Louis XII., and was born at Mazères in 1489. Young as he was, he was left by Louis his lieutenant-general in the Milanese, when that monarch returned to France. Gaston, though only eighteen years old, shewed himself by his skill, liberality, and courage, deserving of the important command.

To him is attributed that generous saying: "Je ne suis riche que lorsque Je donne." On the 11th of April, 1512, he defeated the united forces of the Pope, the Venetians, and the Spaniards, in the decisive battle of Ravenna, but was himself unfortunately killed in an attack on a small body of the enemy which still held together, and which he had the rash courage to assail with only a few followers. His body was afterwards interred with great pomp in the Cathedral of Milan.

Made an early start from Foix, with the intention of avoiding the heat, and going to breakfast at Ax. A long ascent led us to another charming valley, where, not far from its centre, is a remarkable and isolated rocky height, like the Pic du Midi de Pau in miniature. In twenty-five minutes we reached Mont Galleard; here are some ruins of the castle destroyed by Louis XIII., and the views on all sides are beautiful. Above the village, on a height, is a cross, and above that, a fine rocky mountain, one of the boundaries of the valley. The commerce on this road, to judge by the number of carts we met

with, must be very great. On our left, we passed the road to Carcassone, by Ladstanet and Mirepoix; we were struck by the curious flat formation on the opposite side of the Ariège, rocky and partially cultivated; it looked like an artificial line of road, what I fancy the Scotch natural roads near Fort William might be. Some villages are dotted about the landscape, and one far up on the opposite mountain. The range of Pyrenees, at a distance, had a fine effect, and some were covered with snow. We had now a long descent by an excellent road to the river; the outline of the valley bold, rocky, and uncultivated, having the dry, parched appearance which the Appenines sometimes possess. The want of trees is the striking defect of this part of the Pyrenees; the extensive iron mines, and want of proper management is said to be the cause; but measures are now taking to remedy this evil.

The road throughout is excellent, and the approach to Tarascon very picturesque. It has an old tower situated on a rock, giving to the town it overlooks something of the character of Foix. The ruins of its castle, destroyed by Louis XIII., are still visible. An excursion may be made from here to the Grotto de Bedeil-

lac, which is said to be curious; we hope to visit it on our return. From Tarascon, a road leads to Vic-dessos: at its extremity is the Pic de Mont Calm, which is 3251 metres, about 10,026 English feet, above the sea, and said by some to be the highest point of the eastern Pyrenees. Near it, at the village of Sem, are the famous iron-mines of Rancié, one of the most important of France. The little hamlet of Sue, at the foot of Mont Calm, was the scene of the history of the "Folle des Pyrénées." In 1809, some chasseurs saw a woman, quite naked, on the top of a pointed rock—she fled, with astonishing activity, from rock to rock, and was captured with great difficulty. She was then clad, and taken care of; but again made her escape, and was soon seen, with her hair as her only covering, wandering from one almost inaccessible height to another. She eluded every attempt to take her; and, as winter came on, it was supposed she had perished; but, to the surprise of every one, at the return of the fine weather, she was again seen on the tops of the mountains. More decisive measures to take her were successful; she was removed to an hospital, at Foix, where she died raving mad.

From some hints that fell from her, she was

supposed to have been a lady, who, travelling with her husband, in the mountains, was attacked by banditti; the husband was murdered, and she was so affected by the event, that she lost her reason, and continued wandering in the Pyrenees, and, from her expressing a fondness for bears—"for they kept her warm"—it was thought that she must have passed the winter in a cave, with one of these animals.

Before we reached Les Cabannes, the scenery is very pretty—or rather, I should say, very fine. We passed a handsome chateau, on a height to our right: it was built, about one hundred years ago, by Louis Gaspard de Sales, the last Marquis de Gudanes, who was called "Le roi des Pyrénées;" and the position of this castle does credit to his taste. Cabannes is a small bourg, whose street is so narrow that I do not think two carriages could pass each other. The ruins of the Castle of Lordat, perched upon an apparently inaccessible rock, with those of Vebres further on, similarly circumstanced, shew what society was, in the time that they were built, to make such inconvenient fastnesses necessary. Their remains are now most valuable to the landscape.

The view of Ax, surrounded by lofty mountains, though of the second order, is pretty as

approached by the road of which it is the termination. A considerable traffic is carried on between it and Puycerda, the first Spanish town, and, as I afterwards ascertained, plans are now being taken for the construction of a road for carriages to the frontier; though its completion can hardly be looked for, as the expense would amount to little short of a million of francs. From what W—— saw of the line, on his expedition to Hospitalet, it is a very practicable communication—he thought it by far the most level he had seen.

We drove, as we were directed, to the Hotel Segre, kept now by M. Sitri; but found it so dirty and bad, that we started to inspect some of the smart-looking houses we had passed, as we entered the town. M. Sitri would, par force, accompany us to another hotel; but we fortunately resisted his importunities, and found very good rooms at the largest house in the town, M. Rivière's, where we are comfortably lodged for seven and a half francs a-day, the prices of the rooms being fixed by tariff.

Our landlord is a very extraordinary little fellow; he took care, several times, to inform us that he was a notaire, who had built the

house for himself, and extended it into the handsome mansion it now is. In his joint capacity of notaire and lodging-house keeper, he contrived, as we afterwards found, to make out a bill worthy of the two vocations.

Ax is a little town, not as yet much frequented by tourists, to judge by the want of guides, and consequent want of information as to excursions. Its population is under two thousand; but if the merit of the mineral waters depend on their heat, the springs here ought to be the most efficacious of any in the Pyrenees, for they are the hottest; that near the hospital is so hot, that I could bear my hand in it only for a moment: its heat, 78 of Reaumur, 207½ of Fahrenheit. It is most abundant, and is made use of by the inhabitants for cooking.

The name Ax is said to be derived from Aqs, (Aquæ.) It is of great antiquity, and the basin near the hospital was constructed in the year 1200, and was called "Le Basin des Ladres," or Lepers. The number of baths is sufficient to furnish twelve hundred a-day; but the specimen we saw was not at all inviting. The waters have also a soft, soapy quality, which makes them valuable for washing wool.

The weather is still extremely hot; but our rooms are cool, so we think ourselves fortunate in thus again finding ourselves among the mountains. In the evening, I mounted a donkey, and took a promenade on the road leading towards Spain. We passed at the foot of a rock, on the top of which are the ruins of an old castle, said by some to have been built by a lieutenant of Cæsar's.

CHAPTER XVI.

LEGEND OF LORDAT CASTLE, AND THE FAIRY OF THE MOONBEAM.

Ax, Thursday. — Sometimes a trifling circumstance—the aspect of a mountain, or even the shadow of a cloud passing over it—produces such a strong impression, either pleasant or the reverse, that we feel at once it is imprinted on our memory for life. Whilst gravely writing this diary yesterday, I saw the figure of a young girl, at work under the vines in the garden. She was not very beautiful; but there was something so graceful in her attitude, and cheering in her look, that I felt happier as soon as I saw her. The extreme kindliness of her expression suddenly revived in me the persuasion, that, among all our bad qualities, good still lurks in human nature; though sometimes, in

our dark and unhappy moments, we are apt to doubt its existence.

There she is again! and a little girl is with her, who must be her sister—a spoilt one, too, for the pretty child is mischievously trying to undo the hem my unknown friend has been sewing. I must go down in the garden, and pick some of those purple grapes that grow in such tempting clusters above the fair creature's head, and then I will speak to her.

Eight o'clock.—I did speak, and was enchanted with the voice that answered me. Her name is Agnes. She is from Toulouse, and came to drink the waters for her health, "which has been declining for the last two years." As she said this, a deep blush suffused her pale cheek. "But I am very lonely here; for I do not like to associate with the young people—who are, indeed, above me in condition, though not, perhaps, in rank," she continued, with a smile. "My father is poor, and cannot afford to give us enough to enable us to dress so well as others."

I talked to her for some time, and was more and more pleased, for she seems a genuine daughter of Toulouse—that old place, so renowned in ancient days for its floral games;

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THE RUINED CASTLE of LORDAT on the road to AX

full of poetry, and of the spirit of the famous Isaure, with an imagination fed upon, and deeply imbued with, the fairy legends that belong to these regions. She seemed to enjoy relating them to me, rather than speaking of herself, though I tried several times to lead her to tell me more of her own history.

Among the legends, the most original, and that which appears to illustrate the glowing fancy and wild imagination of this ancient people, is the one connected with the old castle of Lordat, the ruin of which I admired so much in our drive from Tarascon that I sketched it. The legend is called, "The Fairy of the Moonbeam:"—

In those good old times, when the court of the Count de Foix rivalled in its splendour that of any king in Europe, there lived, in the neighbouring Castle of Lordat, a valiant Baron and his fair spouse, Sancha. For more than five years after their marriage, they were the fondest, as well as the happiest, pair in the whole comté.

About that time they crossed the frontier of Spain, to visit, at Barcelona, the King of Aragon, who was related to the Baroness. There, it is said, the Baron was so dazzled with the constant succession of tournaments and all sorts

of fêtes, and so fascinated by the bright eyes of the fair ladies of Spain, that he became indifferent to his once-loved wife. Sancha was much admired, and many a gallant Catalonian noble sought to win her heart; but she was not led away by their protestations, or bewildered by the gay scenes, and remained faithful to her forgetful lord.

One night, the Baron of Lordat was at a magnificent fête given by the King, and had wandered into the beautiful gardens which surrounded the palace, with the fair Countess of Segovia, who for the time engrossed his fickle heart. The moon was shining in the full splendour of southern climes, and illumined the orange-groves and statues of the old Moorish palace; but the countenance of the fair lady whose charms had induced him to forget his wife, appeared less beautiful by the pale moonlight than in the illumined halls of the palace. She seemed to be aware of this fact, and begged to return to the gay dance. Just as they were about to re-enter the dazzling halls, the Baron turned to gaze on the beautiful scene he was about to quit, and half sighed as he thought how insensible his fair friend was to its simple beauty. He suddenly

beheld a lady, who appeared to emerge from the shade of a dark orange grove, and pass into the bright moonbeams. She gazed on him with a look of intense pity. Her eyes shone with splendour far beyond any he had ever beheld; and as she slowly advanced towards him, the Baron seemed to be quite spell-bound by her surpassing beauty, and was so enchanted by the fair vision that he began to imagine he must be in Paradise. But at that moment he was reminded, in rather a sharp tone, of his mortality, by the once-admired and adored Countess of Segovia. "Why do you linger here?" she said. "I hear the gay fandango has begun again in the ball-room." So the poor Baron was obliged to proceed into the din and glare of the hot crowd. But, for him, that gorgeous palace had now lost its charm: the music grated harshly on his ear, and the glare of brilliant lamps oppressed him.

As soon as he could leave the Countess, he returned to the garden, and there his eyes were again blessed with a sight of the fair stranger. She was attired in a simple robe of snowy white, and a flowing veil half concealed the tresses of her dark hair. There was an expression of deep melancholy in her lustrous eyes, and yet

the Baron felt so happy at beholding the beautiful creature that he could not help addressing her. She answered him with much kindness; but their conversation did not last long, for as soon as the moon sank behind the distant heights, she said, while gazing upon it, with a melancholy smile, "I must now leave you, and in this place you will see me no more; but if you wish that we should meet again, return to your native valley. At the Castle of Lordat, on the night of the full-moon of next month, you will find me on the southern terrace of your own garden. Farewell!"

With the words, she vanished amid the dark shadows of the orange trees. In vain the Baron plunged into the fragrant recesses of the grove—he could see nothing of the fair creature. He returned to the same spot several nights afterwards, but in vain: she never appeared.

Since that eventful night, the Baron seemed quite altered. The charms of the court, and even the beautiful Countess of Segovia, had lost their fascination; and he at last acceded to the wishes his poor wife had long urged in vain, of returning to their own castle.

The Baroness joyfully prepared to depart, full

of hope that a return to the scenes where they had passed so many happy days might revive her husband's lost affection. But he appeared gloomy and reserved, and, during the journey, treated his affectionate wife with a cold civility that was almost more hard to bear than his total neglect. However, the good and beautiful lady prayed ardently, as she had never ceased to do, that God would restore her husband's affection; and, confident in the goodness of Providence, she preserved so cheerful an air, that her attendants were often surprised at seeing it.

They travelled this very road, continued Agnes of Toulouse; for, since the time when yonder heights were crowned with Roman castles, this has been the high road into Spain—and the easiest pass, too, through all our range of Pyrenees; and I often think how many brilliant trains of warriors and gentle dames must have passed through these beautiful scenes. Well, along this road travelled our patient Baroness and her wayward lord. The sight of his noble castle, even the ardent welcome of his delighted vassals, failed to excite a feeling of joy in the Baron's heart. A dark gloom overspread his formerly joyous countenance; and many were the curses

bestowed by the vassals on the King of Spain and his dissolute court, for having corrupted the heart and destroyed the happiness of their noble lord.

The Baron passed most of his time wandering about the heights we see yonder to the right, just above his castle. He would often remain all night away from home, and return in the morning, tired and out of humour. Still the beautiful Sancha never murmured, but continued to receive him with smiles and welcome.

"So much patience and constancy must be rewarded at last!" exclaimed her attendants, who in those days participated in all the fortunes of the family, and entered more ardently into the joys and griefs of their superiors than they do now.

About three weeks after their return the Baron's manner suddenly altered; he became kinder to his wife, but still he appeared absent, and so occupied with some secret feeling, that he scarcely seemed to hear or see anything that passed. A favourite attendant of the Baroness, who had often followed at a distance the steps of her lord, in order to discover whither his nocturnal wanderings tended, declared that on the night of

the full moon she plainly saw a beautiful lady in white walking with him on the south terrace of the castle; that they talked very earnestly together for some time; the stranger appeared to be reproaching him, and pointed with her white hand, in a menacing manner, towards the windows of his wife's apartment; that he threw himself at the fair creature's feet; but just then the bright moon disappeared behind the mountain tops, and, in the dark shadow it left, she could only see the Baron standing alone, his arms folded, with a dejected air. The tire-maiden searched in the dark walks along the terrace slopes, but she could find no traces of the white lady. The postern gate was locked, and as there was no other entrance to the terrace walks except through the castle, she could not imagine how the stranger could have entered.

All this wild story she told her lady next morning, and they both searched the terrace walk the ensuing evening. They saw the Baron pace up and down, and look eagerly to the right and left, as if he expected some one, but the moon rose and set, and no white lady appeared.

Time passed on, and the Baron still continued his nocturnal walks, but they were chiefly con-

fined to the castle terraces, and certainly in complete solitude. He was kind to his wife, but spoke little, and appeared to be awaiting some expected event with great impatience. The Baron would often watch the sun-dial all day long, and as soon as the moon arose he always started up, with a countenance of eager expectation, and rushed out on the terrace walks. When the Baroness found that he always walked there alone, she once followed him, but he appeared so angry that she afterwards contented herself by sitting at the casement which looked out upon the walks.

One lovely evening in early autumn, when the moon was again at its full, the Baroness saw, from her casement, a figure, clad in white, emerge from the shade of the trelliced vines. The Baron, who had been for hours pacing the terrace, rushed towards it with extended arms; but as soon as he reached the stranger he fell on the ground apparently senseless. Sancha was so much terrified that she hastened out, and on reaching the spot she found the fair stranger gazing with looks of compassion on her prostrate lord.

"Oh, save him!" exclaimed the Baroness,

"save him, fair spirit—for such your heavenly beauty shews you to be—forgive his errors, as I from my heart have always done; and let him not perish for the rash manner in which he dared to approach you."

"Dear lady, and most injured of women, I have done your lord no hurt, and God grant that he may now even be sensible of his faults!" So saying, she touched the Baron with her beautiful hand, and he slowly rose from the ground.

"Go," she said; "follow the advice I have already given, and you will both be happy through a long existence. I have for some time watched your happiness in this my own fair valley, and saw with regret your departure for the gay court of Barcelona. The weaker sex has there proved the stronger, for, in the dangerous ordeal, she came out of the temptation with a spotless conscience. For her sake I appeared to you at Barcelona, in the palace gardens, for we are sometimes graciously permitted to appear to those mortals whose welfare interests us. And now farewell; and may you never need my presence again."

"Do not leave us, fair spirit," said Sancha,

"but remain to witness the happiness your kind interference has restored."

"My dwelling is not here," she said, with a melancholy smile. "I am a spirit of the moon; and only when that bright orb shines in its fullest brilliancy can I visit this earth. Many of my companions, though invisible, surround your path; nor could I now appear to you, but, alas! I have sinned, and therefore I am doomed not to approach this earth, which I loved too well, except in a visible form. Many of my companions can visit mortals, can enter into their joys and sorrows, participate in both, and even avert the latter, unless the affliction ultimately tend to the sufferers' good. But woe to the immortal spirit that so far forgets her bright destiny as to love a mortal!"

"Truly, this is a harsh destiny," said the Baron. "Why cannot the fortunate mortal on whom such affection is placed, be raised in the scale of creation, and rendered worthy of the spotless being who deigns to love him?"

"Alas!" replied the Fairy, "it rarely happens that man's love is so pure, so free from stain, as to permit a sister spirit from our bright orb to

unite herself with him; some few instances have occurred, but my case was not of the number!"

Here she paused, but the Baroness implored her to proceed.

"It is, indeed, too great a pleasure to hear the tones of the human voice, and feel the compassionate eyes of a good mortal upon me, not to gratify your wishes. I loved, and my affection was bestowed on, as I thought, a perfect mortal. I indulged in the blissful thought that by his virtues he would attain to a blessed immortality. Yonder was his home," she said, pointing in the direction of Foix; "a knight well known in the early history of this land. Long unseen did I hover about his path, and once, when he was about to yield to temptation and forget his better nature, I appeared to him. He was immediately so fascinated, that for months he remained faithful and devoted to my image and the service of God. But severe are the consequent trials which are kindly ordained should be the portion of those who strive for a blissful immortality, and arduous and long their probation. In compliance with his ardent prayers, I became visible once more, and then withdrew, having promised, at the

expiration of a year, to be his, if upon trial he were deemed worthy of an immortal bride. During this year of probation he went to the French capital, and there, alas!—but I cannot relate it—I cannot express my anguish when I beheld him daily growing more sensual, when I saw one good feeling after another giving way. I had sworn not to appear, and though often near him, he could not feel, or in any way be sensible, of my presence. This was to me a severe trial, for he was brave and handsome, and possessed a finer imagination, and was more devoted to poetry and intellectual pursuits than his descendant, the famous Gaston Phœbus. But he sinned—he forgot his vows of purity and faith—and when the appointed day of trial came, he was judged unworthy. I was permitted to appear. The interview took place in yonder valley, at the mouth of the grotto of Bedeillac, where he had first seen me.

"I came at the appointed hour: he was there, awaiting my arrival, unlike some, who in one short year have so forgotten their love as to shrink from the interview which is then forced upon them, and becomes an awful punishment. He came—but oh, how changed! though, on seeing me, some portion of his better nature

revived. I spoke the fatal words:—'We must part for ever! Your love for what is good has grown cold, and you have only sought me in hopes that my image might win you from those courses, which, in spite of their fascinating influence, you hate; but this must not be; we are not permitted to accept a divided heart, or to wed a mortal whose mind is sullied by the remotest stain of earthly impurity.'

"The Count was thunderstruck, and ardently implored I would give him another trial; but this was not in my power to grant, and, alas! with despair and anger, he turned from me, and plunged at once into guilt; but, blessings be upon his soul, in his latter days, when old and infirm, he repented, and I was permitted to be with him in his last moments upon earth; and now, though separated from me, he enjoys happiness, but in a degree far less perfect than it would have been, had he proved worthy of my love, and that we had ascended together to the highest heaven.

"But the stain which my pure nature contracted from this misplaced love still defiles me. To mortal eyes, since that fatal day, hundreds of moons have run their courses, and I am

doomed not to be restored to my original brightness till another mortal, through my means, becomes perfect. Be you that one," she continued, turning to the Baron. "Let friendship effect what love could not accomplish. Be faithful to your dear wife, and may you both continue daily to improve in every good feeling, and at last attain everlasting bliss."

The fair Spirit of the Moon-beam never again made her appearance; we may hope, then, that as the Baron was ever afterwards the very pattern of husbands and fathers, and chatelains—she has fully regained her former state of bliss, and that now she visits, invisibly, the inhabitants of this, her favourite valley.

Here the fair Agnes ceased. I asked whether, on the clear moon-light nights that rejoice these regions, she had ever seen one of these aërial beings.

"Often have I looked," she said, "on the nights of full moon, and sometimes fancied I saw one, and felt happier for the thought. And when I lost a dear friend," she continued, with a blush, "the moon was at its full, and its

beams came into our room, at Toulouse. It was a poor garret, in a narrow street, and the noisy sounds of a busy town grated painfully on my ear. The moon shone full upon the bed where my little sister lay ill of the same fatal malady that caused the death of my betrothed, and then, indeed, I fancied that a thin, transparent figure stood in the beam and touched the darling child. I could not stir or speak, but a feeling of religious awe made me sink on my knees, and cover my face. I prayed more fervently than I had ever done before, that God would save my darling sister. I had before been so selfishly absorbed in my own grief that I had almost forgotten to pray. When I again looked up, the figure was gone; but certainly, from that hour, the dear child began to recover, and, thanks be to God, and our Holy Mother, here she is—the little mischievous thing you see, and the very joy of my dear old father's heart, and the comfort of mine! Without that dear child I should never have had courage to live; but now I feel existence necessary, and so I came here to drink these healing waters, and try to recover, for the sake of those two loved beings."

I trust poor Agnes may, indeed, regain her

health, and that her gentle spirit continues to be cheered by the unseen visitor, whose fancied presence seemed so opportunely to have called forth her prayers. Though imbued with the superstitious feelings so prevalent in these majestic scenes, I find Agnes well instructed, and possessed of no mean reasoning powers. We have had several conversations about invisible spirits; she is well versed in the Bible, and maintains that there is no passage in the sacred volume which precludes the belief in the existence and agency of spirits.

> "'Tis mystery all:
> Darkly we move—we press upon the brink
> Haply of viewless worlds, and know it not,"

Says Mrs. Hemans; and our old poet Spencer speaks of the ministry of angels, in these beautiful words—

> "How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
> To come to succour us that succour want,
> How oft do they, with golden pinions, cleave
> The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
> Against foul fiends, to aid us militant?
> They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
> And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
> And all for love, and nothing for reward:
> Oh! why should heavenly love to man have such regard?"

CHAPTER XVII.

Scenery of the Eastern Pyrenees—Excursion to the Spanish Frontier—Hospitalet—Valley of Andorre—Old book-stall at Ax—Fra Luis de Leon's Poems.

THERE is a pleasant shady promenade near the church, but in attractions of that kind, Ax is still far behind-hand. In the afternoon, we had our donkey again, and made an excursion to the Forges d'Orgeix; they belong to a Marquess of that name, and lie in the valley of Orlu, which boasts of a fine pic, and some bold outline. In it flows the torrent of Orlu, by some said to be so called from grains of gold being found in its sands.

A very rough path brought us, in about three quarters of an hour, to a pretty little valley, in which is the forge, and a campagne with its garden, but in a neglected state. Beyond it,

along the side of the river, is a gently-sloping wood, in which are pretty and shady walks. We came home on the left bank of the stream, where the road is better, and commands some very good points of view, particularly of the town, before we descended to join the Puycerda road.

During the morning, we had a most prolonged negotiation with our talkative landlord about horses and a guide to Hospitalet, which is on the road to Puycerda, in Spain, and to the little independent state of Andorre. He undertook to manage it for us, and did it so well, that on our return at seven, we found ourselves without either one or the other.

We received here yesterday a very kind note from M. and Madame St. J——, and we fixed to be at their chateau of Long Pré on Wednesday; so W—— resolved, as no horses can be hired, to content himself with a walk as far as Hospitalet to-morrow. The following is his account of the expedition.

"At six o'clock I started with my guide, whom I found to be an 'ancien militaire,' though only thirty-eight; he had joined the army as a substitute, for which he received fifteen hundred francs —*les quels il n'a pas mangés*. He served his eight

years, during which he had been in Greece, at the time of the battle of Navarino ; he was then discharged, came home, married a woman with fifteen hundred francs as her fortune, and on the interest of their money, and his earnings in various ways, they get on very well, "because," said he, "we have no children." The distance to Hospitalet is reckoned to be four leagues ; I should think about twelve English miles. The trip was fatiguing owing to the road being very stony, and sometimes roughly paved. The mountains immediately about Ax shew more timber than is usual in this part of the Pyrenees—the remains of the forests with which no doubt the mountains were once covered.

"In about an hour we reached a wild and savage pass, the finest, or perhaps I should say, the only fine scenery of the trip, a rocky gorge through which the Ariège passes to reach the valley of Ax. This wild scenery continued between the two bridges, or rather the three bridges which cross the river: the lowest is a wooden one, which, with the stone one above it, is called the Pont de la Borde de les Frates ; the upper, the Pont du Col de la Scala.

"We met a shepherd driving his flock from the mountain ; he said the wolves had destroyed

some of them. These formidable animals are more numerous than in the western Pyrenees. A reward of fifteen or eighteen francs is paid for a she-wolf, twelve for a male. This year, a peasant was lucky enough to find a litter of five or six, for which he received six francs a-piece, besides what he got by exhibiting them at Ax.

"After leaving the gorge, the road ascends rather more abruptly to the valley of Merens; the ascent is, generally speaking, very gradual. Merens is a good sized village, it was once a very rich one, but was destroyed by the Spaniards during the war, and never recovered. It is placed at the opening of two valleys—that to the left is fine—on its sides are good forests of firs, &c., and on the summit, pines.

"The valley of the Port de Hospitalet rises at its extremity into heights, with some snow upon them, but nothing remarkable as to form. Merens is reckoned half way. I reached it in about an hour and a half, and in another hour and three quarters arrived at Hospitalet. The scenery as I advanced became wilder and more rocky, but the heights in no part attain to anything like the boldness of the other passes. Hospitalet is a poor village, containing a population of about one hundred and twenty. By my

guide's account, it is a place of so much passage, that the host of the dirty inn where we breakfasted, with inn-keeping and other speculations, is so rich that he gave four or five daughters, when they married, twelve or fourteen thousand francs a-piece. Whilst my breakfast was preparing, I continued on the road to Puycerda, in Spain, for a quarter of an hour, to a bridge, near which is the frontier of the department, and that of the Pays Neutre of Andorre.

"This little state, which probably owes its existence to its insignificance and the jealousy of its great neighbours, is about twelve leagues long, and contains about six thousand inhabitants; their independence is said to date from Charlemagne, who granted it to them in reward for their services against the Moors in 791. The Andorrans pay to France and the Bishop d'Urgel, a tribute of 1871 livres every two years, and 900 to Spain. They have two chief magistrates called vigniers, one must be always a Frenchman, and nominated by the King of France; the other is chosen by the Bishop d'Urgel, amongst themselves; two syndics and a council of twenty-four form the government; and from what I heard, they appear to be a happy and prosperous community, many of them, however, are not

disinclined to plunder a passing traveller in a quiet way, should the opportunity occur.

"I met some travellers as I returned, who had breakfasted at Hospitalet, and were proceeding to Puycerda. As far as I could see and learn, the country does not become bolder; the contrary is the case, so far as I went, and could learn from some engineers who are employed in laying down a plan for the new road. I was advised to bargain for our breakfast, and thus paid only two francs towards the fourteen thousand, to form the dowry of the handsome but very dirty handmaid, who laid my couvert, and scolded her old mother into greater activity; a brother, a young priest, did the honours of the house to a curè, who occupied one end of the table; I and my guide the other. We had some haricots blancs, not badly dressed, ham and an omelette, a bottle of fairish wine, and pain à discretion, for my two francs; and at twenty minutes after eleven started for our return. Deducting a stop of about ten minutes at a delightful fountain, we were a little more than three hours coming home."

Ax, Friday.—Although this is such a remote and unknown place, I have found more books here

than at any of the fashionable bathing places in the Northern Pyrenees. Some old book stalls, under the trees in the "Place," have afforded me much interest and amusement. I have looked over a great many time-stained copies of old French and Spanish books, and have purchased a few. The other day, I came home in great delight, with a nice copy of the old Spanish poet, Fra Luis de Leon. He was born at Granada, in 1527, and became a monk of the order of St. Augustin, in the year 1543, and many of his poems are full of the true spirit of Christianity. In the evenings, we have amused ourselves by translating some of them from the Spanish, and I will insert one, on "Self-Knowledge," which my dear friend the Viscomtesse de Satgè St. Jean afterwards put into blank verse:—

SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH OF FRA LUIS DE LEON.

'Mid the profound abyss of nothingness,
My captured spirit dwelt enthrall'd, imprison'd,
Devoid of power, or will, or hope of freedom;
My very being was not—life, soul, sense,
E'en fail'd me—alone, unseen, I dwelt,
Bereaved of all sweet fellowship with man;

Those countless grains, wash'd by the ocean's tide,
E'en in their nothingness were more than I;
And the poor earth-worm, crush'd beneath the feet,
Seem'd as a very king compared with me.

In silent circuit round the starlit sky,
Moved the sixth century on rapid wing;
Whilst 'mid that lone, profound obscurity
Of deepest gloom, the Eternal Father saw me;
The God of nature look'd on me with such
A look of love benign, ineffable;
He drew me to the light of earth—clothed me
With this veil of feeble flesh, and gave me—
Oh, rich boon!—a soul immortal, which from
Its spiritual nature might arrive
Within the glorious presence of his love—
Essence divine of light ineffable.

One sole and bitter hindrance chain'd to earth
Its bold aspirings,—innate and inborn sin
Weigh'd down its lightness, and cut short its wings.
Oh, bitter trespass! what the fruits thou 'st left—
Of what rich good hast thou deprived my soul!
So soon it was created and became
One with this perishable garb of flesh;
Thou, foul Transgression! stained its robes of light,
Deprived it of all grace, and truth, and justice—
Render'd it rebel e'en to its Creator—
Blinded, perplex'd, and stripp'd of all protection;
For thee it shuns all good, and cleaves to ill.
Imprison'd in the gilded chains of vice,
Fair virtue's self thou robb'st of every charm;
And oh! for thee, in anguish deep and dread,

Flow'd the rich stream, the one great sacrifice
Of bleeding love,—all miseries with thee
Have enter'd this fair world—tears, hunger, grief,
Poverty, sickness, winter, sin, and hell.

When, in the bonds of sin, I was conceived—
Enveloped in eternal pain, the world
Slumber'd deep, chain'd in false security,
To which I was so link'd and closely bound,
That neither my own virtue, neither that
Of others, could detach or set me free.
One sole means remain'd, provided by that
Goodness infinite, and full of mercy,
Who dying, gloriously effaced our
Sorrows by his own, breaking that sacred
Heart of love, from whence in source, unfailing,
Flow'd the rich stream of grace and free salvation
For a lost world.
Then was this goodness, infinite, eternal,
Pleased to give me a new being, and my soul,
Bathed in the sacred and baptismal stream,
Was raised in purity, endow'd with those
Rich graces, meet for an heir of glory.

Oh! sweet remembrance of Almighty love!
Then did my soul devoutly promise him,
During life's span, to love naught else but Him—
Naught but was for Him and of Him alone.

Oh! if to-day at least she had fulfill'd
Her vows! * * * *

* * * * * *

I grew, and enter'd soon that age mature
Which should have found me giving my poor all
To Him who had so much, so richly given
To me. But, alas! the sacred promise,
Sign'd by this hand at the baptismal font,
Where was it? Scarce had my senses quaff'd
The vicious draught of pleasure, minister'd
By th' arch enemy of souls, than I
Forgot all good! Oh! then what heart so cold
That would not break within him at the thought?
Others for pity—mine for bitterness!

Darker than this world, when the sun withdraws
His smile of light, and plunges in the deep
His golden car, quench'd 'neath the rolling wave—
More sterile, hard, and stony than its bed,
When the soft rains of heav'n descend not there,
My soul remain'd without that treasured beam,
For which it sighs, and languishes, and weeps,—
Without that light divine reflected from
The Sun of Righteousness, and e'en without
That sov'reign dew celestial summer drops
Within the soul—corrupted, blind, deform'd,
A willing slave to pleasure and to sin.

Eternal Father! who, immovable,
Impartest life and movement to all things,
And governest in peace the wondrous whole—
What love hath stay'd the justice of thy blow?
When my ungrateful and audacious soul,
Forgetting Thee, th' eternal source of good,
Threw itself rashly even in thy presence,
'Mid the foul waters, broken cisterns, and
Corrupted streams of vice—what clemency,

Divine and matchless ! which at that instant
Plunged me not in the lake of endless woe !
Divinest Pity spared, and drew my soul
Forth from this stagnant and corrupted pit,
Where, steep'd in false security, she slept,
Unconscious of her deep and foul attaint—
Esteeming her vile state of misery
So rich, so tranquil, she alone desired
That such enjoyments were perpetual.

But, at an hour unlook'd for, a soft breeze
From the Eternal Spirit reach'd my breast,
Wafting around my soul an air so pure,
So mild, the thick o'erhanging fogs which hid
The light of Heaven, were by degrees dispersed,
And all within shone forth serener day.
Then felt I all the baseness of my state ;
Th' awaken'd soul beheld the vile, corrupt,
Unearthly food on which it surfeited,
And knew the fruit of such unholy joys
To be confusion and eternal death !

The fear of that just arm, inflexible,—
The angry look of an Eternal Judge,—
Death, judgment, glory, hell, consuming fire,
By turns besieged my spirit with such force,
Trembling, confused, and fearful, I remain'd
A stranger to all solace and repose.

Bathing my bosom and the earth with tears,
Igniting with my sighs the air around,
I cried—" Father of mercies ! holy God !
Father of consolation—oh, forgive !
Pardon my boldness that I come to Thee !

Although I feel, in shame and deep abasement,
I merit not thou shouldst incline thine ear—
But, oh! behold the wounds my sins have made!
Poor, blind, and leprous, and most meet for pity—
Oh, Thou, whose tender love is over all,
Receive and pardon! Thus, benignant Lord,
Thus manifest its full and saving pow'r,
So richly shower'd o'er all that thou hast made
In thy just chastisements remember Mercy.
Give me not over to mine enemy!
Oh, sovereign Lord! take vengeance as thou wilt—
Afflict me with the scourge, the fire, the lance,
Cut, burn, and bruise, chastise my willing limbs
With many stripes—if, after such correction,
Thou wilt become my Saviour and my God!"

So soon these words pronounced, his tender arms
Were open'd to receive me, and his grace,
His love, and life, were granted and ensured;
Applying to my wounds that sov'reign balm—
That holy, only unction from above,
Sole remedy for sin,—my wounds were heal'd,
My flesh and spirit freed from all disease.
But, oh! this feeble and most helpless nature,
O'er which the tyrant habit holds such sway,
Though cured from this worst evil and its end,—
A monument of saving Love Divine,—
So weak and frail this tenement of flesh,
For ten long years has it been convalescent!

There is, also, a good poem of Fra Luis's on "The Vanity of the World;" and there are some

stanzas on "A Summer's Night," from which I quote the following lines:—

"O! despertad mortales,
Mirad con atencion en vuestro daño
Las almas immortales,
Hechas á bien tamaño,
Podran vivir de sombras y de engaño?
Ay! levantad los ojos
A aquesta celestial eterna esfera,
Burlareis los antojos
De aquesta lisonjera
Vida, con quanto teme y quanto espera."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Grotto of Bedaillac Tarascon—Return to Foix—Long Pré —Rural Fête—Pamiers—Journey to Toulouse.

Saturday, Ax.—Rode again in the evening to the Forge in the valley of Orlu—very beautiful—and red and purple tints of setting sun on the mountains peculiarly vivid. We had delicious shade all the way—just caught it, for as we slowly ascended the steep paths, the shadows moved up with us, keeping just a few yards above our heads till we at last begun to descend towards the river. It was nearly dark when we got home ; we had then a grand discussion and much confusion about a guide and horses for Spain. The scene was a most ridiculous one, but I was both too stupid and irritable to enjoy it.

Tuesday.—I saw in the garden this morning a girl very like Mrs. N——, and I was much

amused as I watched her sitting at work with four men near her. They were all listening to the lively sallies which her lips uttered; from ten till half-past five none of them stirred! The French are much more easily amused and less irritable than the English. Very few Englishmen would have sat listening even to Mrs. N——'s wit during a whole *fine* day; and even on a rainy one, they would have manifested some sort of restlessness during so long a sitting.

Long Pré.—Here I am at a comfortable table at M. St. J——'s, about to occupy myself with a record of our proceedings since we left Ax, until the servant arrives to occupy the table with our first breakfast. On Wednesday, we left our friend Rivière, after giving him to understand that in charging for fire and washing, as he did, we thought him unreasonable. We started at half-past six, the drag chain broke at the first descent, which retarded our progress in some degree, so that it was near nine when we reached Tarascon. The scenery in descending this valley, is, I think, an exception to the general rule, being finer than the ascent, or was it that I was in better humour for its enjoyment? Be that as it may, I admired it greatly; passed a number of villages, so great,

indeed, that the attempt to name them would be useless, for I could not hope to succeed.

After passing through Lazenac, we approached nearer to the fine ruins of the Castle of Lordat, which we admired as we were going to Ax, and I now looked on it with increased interest on account of its moonbeam visitant.

I find that Lordat existed in the tenth century; the extent of its ruins shew what a considerable place it must have been. It is inaccessible on three sides; in 1074, Roger, 2nd Count de Foix, gave it to the Abbey of Cluni, and James I., King of Aragon, occupied it during the war between Philippe the Bold and the Count de Foix. In the wars of religion it was abandoned by the family of Lordat, and it became a ruin; they built the neighbouring Castle de l'Urs lower down, which seems to be fast following the fate of its predecessor, and is not now inhabited.

Near Albeis is one of the most picturesque parts of this beautiful drive. The fine rocky mountain on the right bank of the river, which is the important feature of the drive, here forms a good back-ground to the village. It is not merely the form of this mountain which constitutes its beauty, but its colouring also. The rock has occasional patches of reddish white,

which have a good effect, and the verdure mixed with the rock is probably the remains of the forest with which it was once covered. How beautiful is the neighbourhood of the Cabannes! We again admired the position of the Castle of Gudane.

After traversing the valley, the fine mountain on our right hand was separated from us only by the river; it forms one side of the gorge we entered, the mountains on both sides abound with grottoes. We drove past the little bathing establishment of Ussac, and had a fine view of Tarascon from the hill down which the road winds to reach the town; this road, like all the others in this part of France, is carefully attended to; near Les Cabannes a handsome new bridge has been built. In our descent to Tarascon, we passed another over a ravine, and at the town crossed the Ariège by a short but well-built bridge of hewn stone, which if not of marble, looks very like it.

Our further proceedings became a question, being pressed for time; yet the Grotto of Bedeillac, with the additional interest given to it by the Fairy of the Moonbeam, was irresistible,—so we stepped into a cumbrous old gig—funnily enough called a tilbury, drawn by a worn-out post-horse,

(cheval reformé;) and, with a postillion hung on by the shaft, we proceeded on our expedition. Consultations and preparations occupied some time, so that it was twenty minutes after nine when we started.

The drive was very interesting—the outlines of the valleys bold and fine, and as usual a number of villages. The road good—for some way quite flat, until it reaches a forge, when there is an ascent. This road leads to a large village of Saurat, and is to be continued to St. Girons. The population principally employed with the forges, or connected with them: some peasants, chiefly women, whom we met, were carrying on their heads very large sacks of charcoal. We reached the little village of Bedeillac in forty minutes. The grotto lies in a rocky height to the right; but there are several others in the mountains about, and in the steep one immediately over us, which, as we approached, I fancied was the one we were destined to explore —fortunately, *the* grotto was much easier of access, and not more than ten minutes' walk from the village.

On the summit of the great height above the village is perched a tower, probably, in " hurried

times," intended for a signal tower; they are, I understand, of frequent occurrence in this part of the Pyrenees. The preparations of finding the guide, getting the straw, &c., occupied some time—rather an annoyance, circumstanced as we were. We walked on, and, whilst waiting, had an opportunity of inspecting the grotto, so far as daylight permitted it.

I am not much versed in grottoes, not having seen, so far as I recollect, any of importance, except those of Michelstown, which cannot be compared for grandeur and extent with the grotto we were now exploring. This, too, has the great additional advantage of being throughout so lofty as not to require stooping, and of being, with very trifling exceptions, perfectly dry, and the passage tolerably level—in short, it is very easy of approach. The great hall, which is sufficiently lighted from the entrance to be seen in its details, is very grand. The stalactites and stalagmites, which were once here, have been carried off, but I believe the lofty roof was never supported by pillars; the ceiling is a great arch thrown across the opening, studded with ridges of petrifactions, and the fine open space is very impressive.

As we advanced to the narrower part, light became necessary, and we had a further delay until the straw could be got to light; this point attained, the guide preceded us, holding a bundle lighted, which he renewed, from time to time, from a supply carried by his wife. The effect of light thus thrown on the pillars and masses of rock was striking, and the sight was altogether very interesting.

Sometimes the roof was studded with rounded stalactites like the ornaments of a Gothic ceiling, at others, rising to a height beyond the reach of our light, left its extent to the imagination. The most impressive part is that called the Tombeau de Roland; it is an immense stalactite, which, detached by some convulsion from the roof, has fallen so as to give the idea of a huge sarcophagus. It is said to be twenty-four feet long, twelve wide, and eighteen high, and, placed as it appears to be in the centre of a great hall, is an apt sepulchre for the hero who made the famous brêche.

Besides this, all the remarkable stalactites have been christened. "The great and little Benitiers," are stalagmites, formed by the water dropping into a basin, the sides of which are formed and are continually increasing by the overflowing of

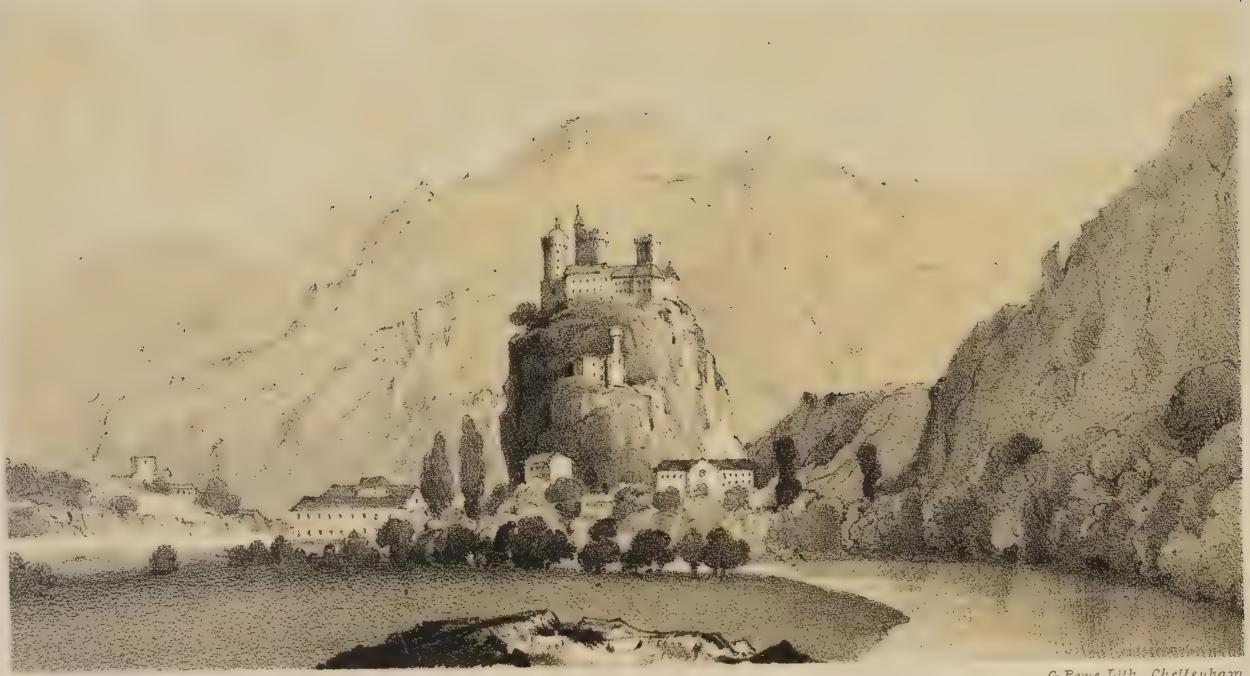
the basin ; "the Bishop's Throne ;" "the Confessional ;" "Two Bells," (folds of petrifaction, which when struck, give, among the gloom and echoes of this great vault, a very deep and solemn tone ;) "the Organ," &c. That of the "Duc d'Orleans" is a very large pillar near the extremity : the present king must have given it a name. It is a mistake to say it requires so long a time to go to the extremity. I should think we did it in half an hour, even stopping to see the various objects. We thought two francs should have satisfied our guide, but were mistaken ; he asked three, which I found was an imposition—the usual charge is ten sous a head. The hunt after crystallizations injures the stalactites very much. I was greatly pleased with our expedition ; and just at twelve, rejoined the carriage at Tarascon.

We then proceeded towards Foix ; passed a little suspension bridge, the object of which is to connect the plaster quarries of Arignac with the kilns of St. Paul, Celles, &c. ; the plaster is celebrated. We again admired the fine Pic du Midi rock, and the approach to Foix. Our landlord of the Rocher de Foix was delighted to see us, and gave us a breakfast which would have done credit to the Rocher de Cancaille itself. Among

its leading excellences were Foie de Canard and rails; this, with a long walk round the town, and the sketch which is here given, gave us plenty of occupation until half-past three, when we started for M. St. J——'s.

The road is tolerable, but not a route Royale; we passed a rich country, still in company with the river Ariège. In the little town of Varilles, not far from Long Pré, there was a fair, and we had great difficulty to get through. Just outside the town, a respectable old man narrowly escaped being hurt; he was startled at finding our horses near him, and, I believe fell between the leaders —we were going very slowly, so he was immediately dragged out, and nothing happened; on regaining his feet, he immediately said to the postillion—"Postillion, il n'était pas votre faute."

We were much pleased with the Chateau de Long Pré, where we arrived about five o'clock. M. St. J—— is constructing a canal to communicate with the Ariège, so as to permit the irrigation of the low meadows below the house, and thus greatly increased the value of the property; he told us that the canal has cost 2000*l*. During the winter he employed many Carlists on it, which gave rise to some interesting scenes, witnessed by Madame——; such as that of a girl who had walked



Etched by Lady Chatterton

G. Rowe Lith. Cheltenham

FOIX, from the road to TOULOUSE.

[illegible]

eight days, to look for her brother, whom she discovered among the workmen; another of a poor woman, broken-hearted for the loss of her husband, having here found a friend who gave her intelligence of him. Every person in this country seems to be violently opposed to the existing government, so much so, that though decided "legitimistes," and with all the horrors of 1789 before them, would risk a revolution for a change.

M. St. J—— had been absent on particular business, and returned on Friday night, having been as far as Perpignan. He went from Carcassone by Limoux, &c., and the Col de St. Louis, which he described as "très gradiose"—splendid wild scenery—the road, very steep, along the side of a precipice, and generally without a parapet. The speculation in which he is engaged is the acquisition of a large extent of forest, which, if successful, is to do wonders for the actionnaires. One of the principals, he having five shares, dined with us on Saturday; he wanted us much to purchase an estate in the Pyrenees, now for sale, 2000 hectares of land, forests, &c., for 60,000 francs. The woods in the Pyrénées Orientales are said to be very fine, being what is termed, forêts vierges.

Saturday.—We drove to-day with Madame de

St. J—— G—— to Foix, and ascended to the castle; the view is grand, but in adapting it to its present destination (a prison) all traces of its former illustrious possessors have disappeared. The round tower is very fine; in it are the cells of prisoners condemned to death. It is now occupied by two brothers, both found guilty of the same murder, and for which another brother has already suffered—that of a master of a forge. He lived with their sister, and had two children by her; he had long promised marriage, or a settlement, but always deferred doing so, until at last the brothers became so exasperated, that they murdered and robbed him. Since our visit, the two remaining brothers have been executed.

To-day, a great fête at Long Pré, and we enjoyed our ramble in its beautiful walks and gardens extremely. The canal was opened, and found to succeed, so the Vicomte gave a sheep to the workmen, and they afterwards danced—he having also provided the music. The men danced very tolerably, but the women were not at all attractive, either in costume, appearance, or dancing, which consisted of the gallopade introduced into the contre-danse, and waltzing. We had some Stentorian singing also, making up in noise and jollity what it wanted in sweetness.

CHAPTER XIX.

Pamiers — Toulouse — Carcassone — Disagreeable journey to Narbonne—Fine Cathedral—Miseries of the South Beziers—Monotony of Olives and Vines.

September 28th, Toulouse. — We left our kind hosts at Long Pré this morning, with much regret, and directed our course towards Toulouse. Pamiers, as approached, is a striking place; its old towers and churches, with an octagon belfry to one of them, have a picturesque and curious effect. Sometimes these towers are put on in the strangest way. Froissart speaks in high terms of the former beauty of this place; he passed through it on his road from Toulouse to Orthes. The account of his journey is so interesting that I cannot avoid making an extract from it:—

"At the time I undertook my journey to visit

the Count de Foix, reflecting on the diversity of countries I had never seen, I set out from Carcassone, leaving the road to Toulouse on the right hand, and came to Monteroral, then to Tonges, then to Belle, then to the first town in the country of Foix—from thence to Mazères, to the castle of Saverdun—then to the handsome city of Pamiers, which belongs to the Count de Foix, where I halted, to wait for the company that were going to Bearn, where the Count resided.

"I remained in the city of Pamiers three days; it is a very delightful place, seated among fine vineyards, and surrounded by a clear and broad river, called the Liege.

"Accidentally, a knight attached to the Count de Foix, called Sir Espaign du Lyon, came thither on his return from Avignon. He was a prudent and valiant knight, handsome in person, and about fifty years of age. I introduced myself to his company, as he had a great desire to know what was doing in France. We were six days on the road travelling to Orthes. As we journeyed, the knight, after saying his orisons, conversed the greater part of the day with me, asking for news, and when I put any

questions to him, he very willingly answered them."

As they were travelling through the steep and difficult pass of La Garde, of which Froissart says that six men could defend it against all the world, the Knight told Froissart the following anecdote of the Count of Foix and the pretty town of Pamiers.

"'Strong as this pass is,' said the knight, 'the Count de Foix once forced it, and advanced even as far as Pamiers, but the English archers greatly assisted him in this conquest. The Count d'Armagnac and the Lord d'Albreth invaded the country of Foix with upwards of five hundred men, and advanced into those parts near Pamiers. It was in the beginning of August, when the corn was harvesting and the grapes ripe—in that year there was great abundance of both—Sir John d'Armagnac and his people were encamped before the town and castle of Saverdun, a short league distant from Pamiers: they made an attack on it, and sent word to Pamiers that if they did not pay a composition for their corn and wines, they would burn and destroy all. Those of Pamiers were afraid of waiting the event, as their lord was at too great a distance,

being then at Bearn, so that they thought it more prudent to pay the ransom, which was settled at five thousand francs, but they demanded a delay of fifteen days which was granted to them.

"'The Count de Foix heard of all this, and by great haste, and sending to all parts for aid, he got into Pamiers through this difficult pass. Assistance came to him from several quarters, so that he found himself at the head of twelve hundred lances. He would have given battle without fail to Sir John d'Armagnac, if he had waited for it, but they retreated into the country of Comminges, leaving behind the money from Pamiers, as they had no time to stay for it.

"The Count de Foix, however, did not hold them quit, but claimed the ransom, as he said he deserved it, for he had come to their assistance, and to drive their enemies out of the country. He paid with it his men of arms, and remained there till the good people had harvested their corn, finished their vintage, and put all their effects in safety.'

"'By my faith,' said I, to the knight, 'I have heard you with pleasure.'

"Thus discoursing, we passed near a castle called

La Bretite, and then another castle, called Bascelles, all in the county of Comminges."

We had a slight ascent after leaving Pamiers, and then, I believe, an unvarying flat all the way to Toulouse. We had the pleasure of looking back upon the noble mountains where we have enjoyed ourselves so much, and which in so many ways have given us pleasing recollections.

Saverdun, where we changed horses, is a very ancient place. Here was born, in 1489, the famous Gaston de Foix, who closed his short, but brilliant career at the battle of Ravenna, in 1512. Beyond Saverdun the rivers Ger and Ariège unite; they afterwards join the Garonne, which we crossed. The country, before we reached Toulouse, is broken into heights, covered with vines; but though well cultivated, is not very interesting.

Toulouse, Tuesday. — I am rather disappointed in the appearance of Toulouse, for I expected this ancient town, once the headquarters of poetry and the revived arts and sciences of the middle ages, would have a more romantic and poetic appearance. From this place, Count Raimond, immortalized by

Tasso, led his valiant subjects to the Holy Wars:

> Buona é la gente, e non può da piu dotta
> O da piu forte guida esser condotta . . .
> . . . . . .
> Ma il buon Raimondo ch' in età matura
> Parimente maturo avea il consiglio,
> E verdi ancor le forze a par di quanti
> Erano quivi, allor si trasse avanti. .
> . . . . . .
> Vivo specchio
> Del valor prisco ; in te la nostra gente
> Miri, e virtù n'apprenda : in te di Marte
> Splende l'onor, la disciplina, e l'arte.*

Toulouse is large, but approached from the side of Pamiers, has nothing striking about it. I thought the streets narrow and ill-paved, and the Place du Capitol not worthy of its reputation; however, it is to be improved. The Capitol itself is a fine building. We turned into the Rue Fayette, leading from it, and there found the Hotel Casset. Had it not been for M. de St. J——'s recommendation, I do not think we should have stayed, for it looked dirty, and the street is narrow and noisy ; but Nos. 27 and 28, the rooms he recommended, were vacant, so we had no excuse. However, we afterwards got

* Gerusalemme, Canto 1—7.

more reconciled to our quarters, by the excellence of the dinner. Before it, we walked out, and saw the Capitol. The Salle des Illustres Toulousains is a rather shabby-looking hall, containing the busts of forty distinguished citizens; that of Louis XIV. is very justly placed at its extremity, for in creating the Canal du Midi, he, at all events, deserved well of Toulouse.

In the room of the council of the Jeux Floreaux is the statue of the illustrious Clemence Isaure—a fat, unpoetic-looking dame of fifty. She established, or some say, revived, those games in 1323. The inscription beneath the statue records that she established a fish and fruit market at Toulouse, on condition that the citizens should support the Jeux Floreaux. We saw the celebrated golden violets, given as prizes; and, in strange juxtaposition, close to the large and heavy kind of knife with which the Duc de Montmorency was executed, in the reign of Louis XIII.

Toulouse, the Tolosa of the Romans, improves on acquaintance, and, considering the hour at which this declaration is made, (five o'clock in the morning—waiting for departure,) by the light of a tallow candle, and after being awoke out of a sound sleep, I think it may

be believed. It is a large and fine town, containing many excellent houses, and many shops of a description announcing luxury and expense. The luxury of the mind, however, is little attended to, if we are to judge by the booksellers' shops, which, so far as we saw, are but poorly provided—rather an unexpected deficiency in a place of such ancient literary fame. The Rue de la Pomme, which runs out of the Place du Capitol, near the theatre, seems to have the best shops.

After seeing the Capitol, and in its Grande Salle, the portrait of Louis Philippe, where, according to report, the original dare not shew himself, we went to the church of St. Sermin. It is in the pure Norman style, and of considerable size; containing a splendid collection of relics, and consequently, is held in great respect. On Wednesday morning, at seven, we returned to the church, with the intention of ascending its fine octagon tower, but, unfortunately, the carilleur was nowhere to be found; we waited for some time in conversation with his tidy little old wife; but in vain. The formation of an open area round the church, which is in progress, will be a great improvement—several old streets have already disappeared,—at the corner of the place is still

the name of one of them, which is curious enough—"Rue des 13 Vents."

On our way to the church, we walked through the market for fruit and vegetables, held in the morning, in the Place du Capitol; an animated and interesting sight. An immense supply of bad peaches, poor-looking figs, and large baskets of black and green grapes, mixed, lay about in all directions, which have a rich and prosperous look in the eye of a northern. We came home by the Boulevard, where much new building is going on; passed through the Place de Fayette, which is regularly built. Here is the Hotel de l'Europe, which, to judge by outward appearance, is much superior to Madame Casset's, where the dinners, however, are very good. We had to-day, ten dishes, exclusive of soup and dessert: in the first course, quails and foie de canard; and in the second, ortolons and partridges—the former excellent.

In our walk after breakfast, we went to two or three book-shops, and then to the Cathedral, an unfinished building. The facade is unaccountably singular—the tower stands at one side, then there is a rosace, but over, neither the great door nor the window. I suppose

the original design was to have placed the tower between the parts of a great pediment. The choir is very fine, and the circular chapels at the eastern end, with the old stained glass, have a good effect.

We returned home, and soon after started to see some sights, in a kind of citadine, with two horses, the communicative driver serving as cicerone. On our way to the Canal du Midi, we passed the arsenal, a large enclosure, saw an inspection of cavalry; most of the men were dismounted; and heard, that the garrison here does not amount to more than five thousand men. We drove along the Canal de Brienne, which, so far as we could learn, is intended as a feeder to the great canal. At its junction with the basin, into which the great canal runs, there is a double bridge; and facing the embouchure, an allegorical bas-relief, now somewhat injured. Here, another canal is being dug, as the coachman said, to communicate with Bordeaux, probably to avoid the uncertainty of river navigation. We afterwards went to the embouchure, where the canal joins the Garonne; the junction is effected by two fine locks. It is altogether a noble work.

We then drove to see the obelisk, erected

on the height occupied by the French during the memorable battle on the 10th April, 1814. The position is so strong, that, defended as it was by a numerous artillery, it is wonderful that any number of troops could have succeeded in taking it. Though the French claim the victory; so far as the obelisk goes, nothing can be more modest; its inscription claims nothing. On one side of the base which supports the obelisk is inscribed, "Toulouse reconnaissante;" on another, "Aux braves, morts pour la patrie;" and on the third, "Bataille du 10 April, 1814;" the entrance door is on the fourth side. As to the disputed question of Soult's knowledge of peace being signed before the battle, I do not see it is material, since it was the Duke of Wellington who made the attack, and it could hardly be expected that, without a struggle, Soult would have abandoned such a position, which must have given him great hope of victory; nor can it be imagined that the Duke of Wellington knew that peace was signed; though it is curious enough that when Mathew wrote his "Diary of an Invalid," it was upon the Duke that the imputation of this useless battle was cast.

We drove home by the Jardin Royale, a planted walk—nothing remarkable, and having no view; that from the obelisk is very commanding, and in a clear morning in spring must be beautiful; to-day is misty, and the range of the Pyrenees but dimly perceptible; the town, spread below, with its churches and towers, looks very important; but now the country has the dry, burnt-up appearance of an almost concluded harvest.

In the evening, we went to the theatre to see "Lucia di Lammermoor;" and on our way, passed through the Place; it now exhibited a very gay appearance, being covered with "Two-sous-a-piece" shops, lighted up with paper lanterns.

The theatre is handsome, and the performance was good; but the crowd and heat were so great, that we remained only for the first act. The Toulousians are said to be *bien difficiles* in theatrical matters, and to-night a false note made by one of the singers was immediately hissed. An Italian tenor sang well—but in Italian; the rest of the performance being in French; a very plain actress sang very well also. We took refuge from the heat at a café,

where we enjoyed some ice, and then had a cool walk home by a brilliant moon.

Friday. In the carriage, between Toulouse and Carcassone. — The country is bare and ugly. There are, indeed, plenty of almond trees, but they are so thinly planted that they have but little effect; and the fields at a distance look like monstrous pieces of old brown thread-bare cloth with all the nap off. A high scorching sirocco is blowing in our faces. This parching, glaring weather is only bearable in a dark room. How much more depressing to the spirits is the hopelessly hot sun and sirocco wind of southern climes, than any gloom of rainy or even foggy weather in the north. I wish persons who abuse our gloomy climate and cold east wind could be convinced of this, for it would make them better contented with poor dear England. The aspect of the country to-day put me in mind of Tennyson's description of Mariana in the South:

"With one black shadow at its feet,
The house through all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines.
A faint blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.

. . . . Without, the steady glare
Shrank the sick olive, sere and small,
The river bed was dusty-white,
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall."

I felt how much harder her lot must have been than that of Mariana in the North, though Tennyson gives a most living, or rather dying, picture of the gloom in a moated house of our northern lands.

MARIANA IN THE MOATED GRANGE.

" With blackest moss the flower plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all,
The rusty nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange,
Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.

" All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd—
The blue fly sung i' the pane ; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about ;
Old faces glimmer'd through the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices call'd her from without."

We started to-day at six o'clock, and reached Carcassone at three — the distance, ninety-five

kilometres. We stopped about twenty minutes at Riquet's monument; so we were eight hours and a half doing about sixty miles, rather more than seven miles the hour, including stops. The road near Toulouse is very fine and quite flat. In a short time, passed a house, which, at a distance, resembled a fine English seat, but on a near approach the likeness ceases. The road rises near Castelnaudary, but an inferior range of low hills probably intercepts the view of the Pyrenees; however, even if visible, we could not see them on this worse than cloudy day, for, though the sun shines, there is a thick haze, with a strong south-easterly wind.

Before reaching Castelnaudary, we came to an obelisk, placed on a commanding height not far from the road; the mound is partly artificial, and the rock on which the monument stands seems to have been in part brought for the purpose. The monument was erected to the celebrated engineer of the Canal du Midi: on the base of the obelisk, on one side, is the following inscription:—

"L'an 1825, le 2 du regne de Charles X, ce monument a été élevé à Pierre Paul de Riquet, Baron de Bon-repos, Auteur du Canal de deux mers en Languedoc, par ses descendants."

Then follow the names of eleven of the Caraman family, some of Cambons, Barons de Bon-repos Avessons, and Airzard. On the opposite side is simply the name, "Paul de Riquet." The canal was begun in 1666, and finished in 1681. Riquet died two or three years before its completion; it is said to have cost 17,000,000 livres, and is 239,507 metres long, (about 159 English miles.) At Castelnaudary, I went to see a basin of great extent, which serves as a harbour for the boats when the canal is being cleaned.

The country became bare and more destitute of trees as we approached Carcassone; but the old town itself is picturesque. We first drove to the Hotel Bonnet; finding it full, we went to the Angel, which, though looking anything but an angel of light, turned out tolerably good—at least, less bad than its exterior led us to expect.

Friday evening, Carcassone.—We walked up to the "cité," the old town, which is situated on a considerable height beyond the Faubourg, and now abandoned to the lower orders—probably from its difficult approach and want of water. It is very curious, surrounded by an irregular old wall, with towers partly ruined, but now in

some measure kept up. The church is very handsome, and has nothing to shew its participation in the decay with which it is surrounded. About a year ago, an interesting tomb was discovered here, which had been covered with rubbish, and is consequently in perfect preservation; it is that of a bishop: his figure, in full length, stands on the sarcophagus, on the sides of which is a bas relief representing a funeral procession, with a number of figures and ornaments; there is also an inscription, and the date 1266.

The modern town has the reputation of a "jolie ville;" but I do not see why. Its streets are regular, but very narrow; the "*place*" has some trees, rather scarce things, and a handsome fountain, adorned with a figure of Neptune, supported by sea-nymphs and dolphins. Carcassone was the Carcasso of the Romans: Cæsar says, "Multis viris fortibus Carcassone nominatim evocatis in exercitum introduxit." This certainly contradicts tradition, which gives a different origin to the name—a far more romantic one, and therefore, if not true, ought at least to be so. It is as follows:—

The ramparts of Carcassone are curious from

the antiquity of their construction, and the traditions which are attached to them. A singular one is connected with the tower which still exists near the gate of Narbonne. It appears that when Charlemagne besieged this place, it was defended by a Saracen woman named Carcas; she shewed herself in every direction—shooting an arrow from one place, hurling a javelin from another, and a stone from a third, so as to give the appearance of a numerous garrison; and, to induce the belief of an abundant supply of provisions, threw to the besiegers the body of a pig which had died from a surfeit of maize.

Charlemagne, discouraged by these appearances, was on the point of raising the siege, when the above-named tower made him a most profound bow. The emperor, struck by this extraordinary act of politeness, made another attack, and entered the town. Like a true knight, he caused the bust of the heroic defender to be placed on the wall, with the inscription "Carcas sum," (I am Carcas,) of which the present name, Carcassone, is a corruption. This rude but memorable piece of sculpture still exists, and was pointed out to us in the wall by our cicerone.

Edward the Black Prince laid siege to Car-

cassone in 1355, and "burnt the suburbs, but could do nothing to the town, as it was well defended. He then marched to Narbonne, burning and destroying the country."

Saturday. In the carriage, between Carcassone and Narbonne.—This day's journey was a very dismal one; the south-east wind brought with it a heavy leaden atmosphere, which made the dull, uninteresting country we travelled through, still more monotonous; luckily, the posting is excellent, and the road generally good, though undulating.

Before reaching Narbonne, we came to some rocky mountains, but no interest about them, all is dull and burnt up; withered vines, the only crop left, and that is fast disappearing, for the vintage, which now occupies all the world, has begun; met numbers of carts, carrying baskets full of grapes. Narbonne is a wretched-looking place; I can imagine, with the old French poet, that

> "Dans cette ville de Narbonne,
> Toujours il pleut, toujours il tonne."

Eighteen hundred years ago it was of considerable importance, and was chosen by Augustus as the

place of meeting for the states of Gaul. The sculptured marbles with which its walls are studded, attest former magnificence. These relics were thus placed by Francois I., to save them from destruction.

At Narbonne, the marriage of Atolphus, King of the Visigoths, with the sister of the Emperor Honorius, took place. It is said that the royal barbarian, proud and happy at such an alliance, placed at the feet of his beautiful bride a hundred vases, full of gold, pearls, and precious stones.

The first Christian Bishop of Narbonne was Sergius Paulus, who is described in the Acts of the Apostles as "Sergius Paulus, a prudent man: who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God;" and it appears that he did not send for them in vain, for we read in the 12th verse of the 13th chapter, that "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

The church of Narbonne, though consisting only of what was originally intended for the choir, is beautiful; the altar has six splendid pillars of Languedoc marble: it is of great height,

and has some fine windows of old stained glass. The original idea was grand; it is now being partially carried out, and a chancel is being built.

We have just spent a fatiguing hour at Narbonne, in the midst of all its dirt and smells: and now the view begins to improve. Behind us is a good prospect of the Eastern Pyrenees, with the noble Canigou towering far above its companions: on our right, the blue Mediterranean forms a fine boundary to the vine-clad plain towards the south, and in front of us, to the west, are the undulating heights near Beziers. But it is much too hot to write; besides, I often think of Milnes' lines:—

"Try not, or murmur not if tried in vain,
In fair rememberable words to set
Each scene or presence of especial gain,
As hoarded gems in precious cabinet.
Simply enjoy the present loveliness;—
Let it become a portion of your being;
Close your glad gaze, but see it none the less,
No clearer with your eye, than spirit seeing;
And, when you part at last, turn once again,
Swearing that beauty shall be unforgot;
So in far sorrows it shall ease your pain,
In distant struggles it shall calm your strife,
And in your further and serener life,
Who says that it shall be remember'd not?"

I have found that if a scene does not make a sufficiently vivid impression to be always remembered, even our own description, however glowing it may be, and though written at the moment, will not afterwards bring the scene strongly to the mind. The description may indeed excite pleasant feelings, and we shall see *something* before us, but it will not be the place itself.

Beziers: evening.—We had a sharp ascent to reach this town, which stands on a considerable height. The hotel we stopped at proved very disappointing; it appeared the best, but turned out to be a bad one; its enormous landlord, who looks like a Jew, asked, in the first instance, fifteen francs for our rooms, and then lowered his price to eight. We heard afterwards, from good authority, that the Hotel du Nord is very comfortable.

We are now in the Department de l'Herault, and by a narrow bridge crossed the Orbe to reach the town; a new bridge is being constructed. On the promenade is a fine, but rather extravagant, bronze statue of Riquet.

The sirocco continues its blighting influence, the heavy atmosphere looks as if it would rain

every moment, but no rain comes: we had a few tantalizing drops to-day. As we went this morning to see the church—formerly, I believe, the cathedral of Beziers—we had an opportunity of observing that its narrow streets are the dirtiest I ever saw; filth is everywhere—even the entrance to the church is not respected.

The church is a fine one, but without aisles; the great altar occupies the entire of the semicircular east end, and is rich in Languedoc marble, having fifteen or sixteen pillars inferior in size and beauty to those of Narbonne, but of the same description.

We returned by the "Place," still called, "de la Citadelle," though it no longer exists. This is a fair day; quantities of sheep were assembled as the market of Beziers is celebrated. In clear weather, the view from the terrace near the church must be very fine. We were pointed out the position of the seven locks of the canal, said to be worth seeing; but it is about a quarter of an hour's walk from the town—too long a one for our limited time in this depressing weather.

In the year 1399, Charles VI. of France came to Beziers, and his visit there, with the fêtes it occasioned, are well described by Froissart. He

says—"When the king had, for fifteen days and more, taken his amusements with the ladies and damsels of Montpelier, and his ministers, during that time, had attended to the state of the town, for that had been the cause of his coming, and he had made many reforms, and taken off several heavy taxes of which the inhabitants had complained, he graciously took his leave of the ladies, and one morning, very early, departed, following the road to Alipiam, where he dined, and lay that night at St. Thibery. On the morrow, after his morning draught, he set off and came to Beziers, where he was received most joyfully, for the good people of that town and the adjoining ones were anxious to see him, in order to make their complaints against an officer of the Duke of Berry, called Bethisac, who had impoverished the country all around by seizing whatever he could lay his hands on."

The King of France was met at Beziers by the bishop and all the clergy in their robes, and the citizens, ladies, and damsels in procession: they formed a lane, through which he rode a foot's pace; and as he passed, they all fell on their knees. In this manner was he conducted to the cathedral, and dismounted at the portico, where

a rich altar had been erected, adorned with holy relics from the church.

After having made his devotions, he went to the palace that was adjoining, where he and his brother and uncle were lodged. "The King was three days revelling with the ladies and damsels of Beziers," before any notice was taken of the suspected Bethisac; but the inquisitors who had been appointed to make inquiries concerning him were not idle, but did their office secretly, and discovered many atrocious acts deserving the severest punishment.

But on inquiry, it was found that although Bethisac had impoverished and extorted great sums of money unjustly from the people, he had not kept any for himself, but given every farthing to his covetous master, the Duke of Berry. He was then at first acquitted, but the people were not satisfied, and resolved that the poor servant should be punished for the faults of his master.

In consequence, Bethisac was remanded before the council, and again more closely examined; yet still he would probably have been acquitted, had not his enemies devised a cruel plot for his destruction. Seeing that the law was now in his favour, and that secular power could not

prevail against him, they determined to make him offend the clergy.

Some persons visited his prison at night, and frightened him, by saying, that he could not possibly escape the King's anger; at the same time, they advised that he should confess that he had erred from the faith, and was a heretic.

"Keep steady to this declaration," they said; "for the Bishop of Beziers, when he hears this, will claim you to be given up to him. This will be instantly complied with, and you will be sent to Avignon, when no one will venture to accuse you in opposition to the Duke of Berry, whom the Pope dare not anger."

Bethisac unfortunately believed all this false information; and, in the morning, he sent for the inquisitors, and confessed that he did not believe in the resurrection. These men, overjoyed that he had now fallen into their net, hastened to the King, and reported what Bethisac had declared. He was much astonished; and said, "We order him to be put to death! He is a wicked wretch—a heretic and thief. We will, that he be burnt and hanged, that he may have the reward he deserves; nor, for anything my uncle of Berry can say, will I pardon him." Be-

thisac was then hurried to the square before the palace, where, to his horror, he saw a fire already lighted, and a gallows near it.

In vain he demanded to be heard: much haste was made, and he was fastened to the stake. They then covered him with dry fagots, to which they set fire. And thus was Bethisac burnt, and his bones hanged immediately in front of the King's apartments.

CHAPTER XX.

Montpellier—Disappointment—Pictures and curiosities—Maison de detension centrale.

Montpellier, October 1st.—From Beziers we took the lower road, and had more trees and verdure than we have seen for some time. The canal was on our right; it joins the sea near Agde, a small dirty place, with a suspension bridge over the Herault. The circular basin of the canal, and the passage of a torrent, called Libron, through the canal, are said to be fine works.

The country continues devoted to vines: the produce must be enormous. After Agde, we passed round a large village, Marseillan, and saw the position of Cette, under a hill at the extremity of a tongue of land running into the sea. Cette is famous for its wine manufactories, where

wines of every description are imitated. The Mediterranean, as its shores here are flat, does not appear to advantage. The same kind of scenery continued, its chief object of interest being the town of Frontignac, so famous for its wine. Contrary to our expectation, we had no ascent to reach Montpellier: we could not get rooms at the Hotel du Midi, but found excellent accommodation at the Hotel de Londres.

Here we have southern suns and southern fruit, &c.—but where — oh, where are those charms of the south, people rave about? I neither see nor feel any of them: no flowers, no luxuries, such a contrast to the north of Germany, where every house, or even cottage, has its balcony of choice flowers. In this attraction, even gentlemen's houses are deficient. For the last few days the weather has been so *suffocatingly* hot we could scarcely bear any clothes on; last night it suddenly changed, and obliged us to put four times the quantity of bed clothes, and even then I awoke shivering. Is this in reality the far-famed Montpellier, whose name is connected in our northern minds with all that is beautiful, soothing, and cheerful? Oh, how much less pleasant is the original than all

those lovely nooks and sunny slopes which bear the name of Montpellier, in dear England. The glare and dazzle from white walls and roofs put me in mind of Brighton, but the air is not so pleasant nor invigorating as that of our famous bathing-place.

After breakfast, yesterday, we took a walk. The Grande Rue, though a narrow street, is a good one, cleanly kept, with many excellent houses, but the boulevards outside the old town is the part which is coming into vogue. The esplanade opposite the citadel is a fine walk. Mr. G—— called whilst we were out, to take us to the French Protestant Church: there are about 1800 protestants at Montpellier, and three clergymen, who disagree personally, and in doctrine; and of course the result is, that their flock is diminishing.

We dined to-day with Colonel W——, and met an intelligent Frenchman, M. L——, with whom we had some interesting conversation. It seems that the idea of perfect equality as to inheritance is now, since 1830, so rooted in the minds of the people, that it extends to everything, and great jealousy is excited, if, during his life time, a parent does not observe towards

his children the same principle even in his presents.

Tuesday.—We visited to-day the Maison de Detension Centrale pour les Femmes, for which M. L—— had given us an order, and which is not easy to obtain. It is a fine establishment, destined for the female criminals of the neighbouring departments, who are condemned to imprisonment for a period exceeding a year: 488 are now there. The strictest silence is always observed, and punishment ensues if one prisoner be detected speaking to another. It is under the care of a director; but the details of the management are confided to nineteen Sœurs de la Société de St. Joseph. Several of them are very nice-looking young women, rather coquettish in their costume, which is very becoming; under the black capulet is one of light blue, the effect of which is very pretty.

All the prisoners are kept at work, weaving silk, making stockings and night-caps by machinery, carding, spinning, &c. The wool is entirely prepared in the house: in one ward the prisoners were removing it from the skins. A sister presides in each ward. The whole is kept in excellent order, and the prisoners were particularly clean.

As well as I understood, they are fed by contract, and the contractor disposes of the manufactures; one-fifth goes to him, and of the remaining four-fifths, one-third is for the benefit of the prisoners; each receives a small sum for present use, and the rest is put by to each individual's account, and *la masse* given on the expiration of the term of imprisonment: the two-thirds of the four-fifths go to the benefit of the establishment.

I spoke to several of the sisters, all of them very pleasing, and of mild and gentle manners: what a deep feeling of duty must be theirs, to enable them to support the *ennui* of such a life! How I pitied one young woman, whose class was carding wool in a close, dusty atmosphere; the monotony of the work the only sound to break the gloomy silence.

There is a school attached to the establishment, where the well-behaved criminals, by permission of the inspector, are permitted to attend. Between sixty and seventy are now in attendance. A sister told me that they hoped some who returned into society were improved in conduct; they had only two cases of former inmates sent back for fresh crimes. Mdlle. Grouvelle, who

conspired against the life of Louis Philippe, is a state prisoner here. She is willingly a strict observer of the rules of the establishment, as she never speaks to any one, and sees no one, not even the clergyman; she was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, two of which have expired.*

We went from the prison to the Botanic Garden, which is a celebrated one, and contains the tomb of Narcissa, the daughter of Young, the poet. A lotus is here in bloom, the first of the kind which has bloomed in France; it bears a flower of a deep rose colour. The greenhouse is too low for many of the loftier exotics, but it has a fine specimen of the catchouc plant and the banana. The tomb of Narcissa is in a recess of the wall, and has the following beautiful inscription — "Placandis Narcissæ manibus." Christian burial was denied because she was a heretic; the mob surrounded the house, and demanded the body, that they might throw it into a ditch. At night the unfortunate father carried her forth in his arms, and placed the body in the wall, where it remained undisturbed.

* Since we visited the establishment, the famous Madame Laffarge has been imprisoned here.

Young brought his daughter here for the benefit of her health. He says—

"Soon as the lustre languish'd in her eye,
Dawning a dimmer day on human sight;
And on her cheek, the residence of spring,
Pale Omen sat; and scatter'd fears around
On all that saw, (and who would cease to gaze
That once had seen?) With haste, parental haste,
I flew, I snatch'd her from the rigid north,
Her native bed, on which bleak Boreas blew,
And bore her nearer to the sun: the sun
(As if the sun could envy) check'd his beam,
Denied its wonted succour; nor with more
Regret beheld her drooping than the bells
Of lilies; fairest lilies, not so fair!"

She soon died, and Young says of Death—

"It call'd Narcissa long before her hour:
It call'd her tender soul by break of bliss,
From the first blossom, from the buds of joy;
Those few our noxious fate unblasted leaves
In this inclement clime of human life."

The difficulty he experienced from the bigotry of the population is touchingly expressed in Night the Third. He says:—

"More like her murderer than friend, I crept
With soft suspended step, and, muffled deep
In midnight darkness, whisper'd my last sigh.
I whisper'd what should echo through their realms:
Nor writ her name, whose tomb should pierce the skies."

The report current here is that an "English prince," about twenty or thirty years ago, placed the stone, with the appropriate inscription.

Mr. G—— discovered the author. Being at a dinner party, he accidentally spoke of the beauty of the inscription: M. Candolle, the celebrated botanist, was of the party. Mr. G—— observed he blushed, and this led to the discovery that he was the author. But dull matter-of-fact has sadly interfered with all the romance of this story. Mr. G—— read lately in a Lyons paper, that Narcissa died at Lyons, and that the registry of her interment was recently found among the documents of a church there.

During our walk, saw two fine staircases, one of them particularly so, of the time of Louis XIV., the work of Paghul; the ornaments very rich. There are several fine houses here: the one where the states of Languedoc used to assemble is now let out to different persons.

We went home at four to dinner, and immediately afterwards walked up to the Pieron to see the view. Disappointed as to the distant mountains; but the home view, thickly studded with white villas, has a rich and prosperous

effect. Scarcely a shopkeeper of Montpellier but has a country house.

There is a triumphal arch opposite the entrance to the Pieron, which, strange to say, is united to the shabby houses adjoining. On it is the following inscription :—

> Ludovico magno LXX annos regnante
> Dissociatis repressis conciliatis gentibus
> Quatuor decennali bello conjuratis
> Pax terra marique parta, 1715.

The Pieron is a noble walk. The aqueduct, which is worthy of Rome, and the Chateau d'Eau, combine well; the whole is on a majestic scale.

I forgot to say, that after our return from the Maison de Detension, we went to see the pictures of the Marquis of Montcalm; a name well-known in the history of Languedoc, as a leader during the religious wars; an ancestor of the present Marquis commanded the French at the battle of Quebec. The house we visited is a modern one; it has been built but a few years; it is pretty and comfortable; the collection of pictures good. There is a beautiful Greuze—a young girl pulling the leaves of a flower, and endeavouring to ascertain by this means if her lover is thinking of her. The picture tells a

whole story of character; such innocence and modest repose, a sort of assumed indifference too,—as if delicacy prevented her from being flurried—as if she would scarcely confess to herself what she was doing or thinking of, much less pronounce the adored name. We admired a St. Joseph, or Jerome, with an infant in his arms, by Guido. Two Salvator Rosas; one a battle-piece of great spirit. In the adoration of the Shepherds by Philip de Champagne, the light proceeding from the child is well managed, and some of the figures are very good; but it struck us that there is a sad want of dignity about the infant.

We then went to the Museum, which contains many good things—particularly Mr. Faber's collection, which he inherited from the Countess d'Albany. We had scarcely time to see half the collection, when the hour of closing (three o'clock) arrived.

CHAPTER XXI.

Journey to Nismes—La Maison Carrée—Interesting Poet.

Nismes, Friday 21*st.*—We started from Montpellier at half-past seven, and reached Nismes at twelve. The scenery is "weary" and "flat," but not "unprofitable," for it produces vines in every direction. We changed horses at Lunel—a flourishing little town, celebrated for its wine. We bought a bottle of its vin de Muscat for three francs, and found it not amiss at our breakfast, en voiture, on bread and grapes.

Nismes is, in many points of view, a most interesting town ; in its greatness, under the Romans, to which its magnificent ruins, or rather remains, bear testimony (for the Maison Carrée can scarcely be called a ruin)—in the singular history of its religious wars, and in its present state.

It is a handsome and improving town. The new Palais de Justice, &c., will be a beautiful building, in excellent taste; and the new street, terminating with the Maison Carrée, is well-built. The Boulevard de la Madelaine, with the fine hospital for old men and women on one side, shaded by four rows of trees, is very handsome. The amphitheatre is finely thrown open, and few public buildings are so well placed as the Maison Carrée. Nothing now, since the removal of some old houses, interferes, and it is highly ornamental.

As soon as we were installed in an apartment at the Hotel Luxembourg, which, to our surprise (so far as rooms go) is excellent, though the living is inferior and dear, we issued forth to see the sights. In driving to the hotel, which is on the esplanade, we passed by the amphitheatre, and it was our first object.

"Rèste d'un vieux géant, débris dont la stature
Du Nîmes d'autrefois peut offrir la mesure."

REBOUL.

As I have already said, it is very well-placed, in an extensive area, which it must have been difficult and expensive to create. I think it once itself teemed with population, every arch had its

occupants; so that from a feeling of pity to them, Francis I. recalled the order for their removal; now it stands "alone in its glory," not an inhabitant, except the concierge, to interfere with the solemnity of the scene.

It gives, indeed, an idea of the colossal greatness of the Roman power, which could, at this distant part of its empire, create so stupendous a work. Considering the attempts made to destroy it, and the neglect to which it has been for ages exposed, it is wonderful as to preservation. It consisted of two stories—the lower range of arches, sixty in number, is perfect; part of the second story, towards the south, has been destroyed; the remaining arches of the second story are not only perfect, but so is the attic which surmounts them, and on which are the projecting stones, with holes in them, to support the poles of the velaria.

The pilasters are of the Doric order. It had thirty-five rows of seats, and could contain nearly 24,000 spectators—on the seats, the space for each spectator is marked. The principal diameter is 405 feet long, the less 317, the circumference 1140, and the height 66. Many of the seats, particularly towards the south, have been

destroyed, and in no part are they perfect, from the top to the bottom.

It is said, that owing to the lowness of the podium, which is only eight feet two inches in height, this amphitheatre could not have been used for combats of wild beasts ; still in the excavations which took place in 1822 and 1823, the tusks of wild boars, and the teeth of elephants were found; and the canals for conducting water, shew that sea-fights took place here.

> "Arène où s'égorgeaient le Gaulois et le Thrace,
> Contents d'être applaudis avant que de mourir,
> Devant ce peuple-roi qui voulait qu'avec grâce
> On rendît le dernier soupir."
>
> REBOUL.

This is still used as the scene for athletic exhibitions. On Sundays, there are wrestling matches, which are so attractive, that they are announced by bills; those for the sports of Sunday next are already 'affichés.' Bull-fights took place here, but they are now discontinued. Reboul told us that the effect of the crowd occupying every part of the interior, and especially their shouts, is very grand.

This amphitheatre was built by Titus in the year 82. It is surprising how it has remained so

entire. In the irruptions of the barbarians it was converted into a fortress. In 737, Charles Martel, who had been more than once obliged to take it from the Saracens, endeavoured to destroy it, by filling it with wood, which was afterwards ignited. The stones were in many parts calcined, but the heat did not blow up the passages as he intended. Some of the passages have been restored, so that the approach to the upper seats is now made very easy, and the view from them, of the interior, is very fine.

At one period, the amphitheatre was independent of Nismes, and had its own magistrates; and even in 1809, it contained 2000 inhabitants. Napoleon ordered the demolition of the habitations, which was finished in 1812; and in 1822 the ruins were cleared out, and the repairs begun.

From it we went to the Maison Carrée, now standing in the handsome "place," of which the theatre, with its fine portico, forms one side. The preservation of this monument is wonderful; M. Perrot, the concierge, says that it is the best preserved existing. All the acanthus leaves of the capitals are perfect; whereas in the Pantheon at Rome, there is only one. Its length is ninety-

five feet two and a half inches, the breadth forty-four feet nine inches, and its height fifty-five feet. The interior of the building now devoted to a museum is forty-eight feet long, thirty-six feet wide, and of the same height—thirty-six feet. It has thirty columns, twenty-eight feet and a half high, (ten diameters and a half ;) they are of the Corinthian order, fluted and very beautiful; the capitals are quite perfect, both for workmanship and preservation.

The building stands on a platform, eleven feet high; and a flight of fifteen steps leads to the portico, which has twelve columns, six in front, and four on each side, including the corner ones—thus reckoned twice over. The building has eleven columns on the sides, and six in front; of those on the side, seven are for half their diameter in the wall. A beautiful frieze goes all round the building, except the façade, where was an inscription in bronze. This was removed, but by means of the holes in the stones, and the stains remaining, a good guess has been made of its import. This has been the subject of much antiquarian discussion. M. Sequier traced it accurately so long ago as 1758, and published his version, with which

M. Perrot coincides. According to them, it was as follows :—

C. Cæsari. Augusti F. Cos. L. Cæsari. Augusti F. Cos Designato. Principibus Juventutis.*

Being erected in honour of Caius and Lucius Cæsar, by their father, Marcus Agrippa, in the reign of Augustus, eighteen years before Christ, they being the adopted sons and intended successors of Augustus.

It stood in the centre of a magnificent forum, and in the excavations the position of the bases of three of the columns of the forum were found in their position; the remains of an entablature shew that this was a fine portico, of the same dimensions, as to the height of the columns, &c., as the Maison Carrée, but on a lower level, standing also on a platform, raised above the level of the street, from which it was approached by flights of five steps. Many remains, found in removing the old houses, are now ranged within the enclosure of the Maison Carrée.

Its destination has been curiously varied: originally, as I have said, a heathen temple, it became, in 345, a church of the early Christians,

* To Caius Cæsar, the son of Augustus, Consul: To Lucius Cæsar, the son of Augustus, Consul elect: The Princes of the Youth.

who destroyed the forum. After the Moorish invasion it became a mosque, but Charles Martel, in 727, restored it to the church; in 1050, it was l'Hotel de Ville; and remained so to 1540, when it was exchanged for a piece of ground for a new Hotel de Ville, and the Marquis de St. Chaptes bought and converted it into a stable. In 1670, the order of St. Augustin made a chapel of it, and held it until the revolution of 1789; the clubs of 92 and 93 held their sittings here, and in 1815, it was used as a kind of arsenal. In 1820, the excavations were commenced, and in 1824 it was opened as a museum.

Remains of antiquity in the centre of a town, however fine or splendid they may be, do not cause such pleasant feelings as much less perfect monuments in a beautiful country, or even in a flat and solitary desert. If the Maison Carrée and the amphitheatre here, had such a locale as the temples at Pœstum, their effect would be quite magical. So much is my foolish imagination influenced by surrounding accompaniments, that I was more interested and pleasantly impressed by the temple of Diana, and remains of Roman baths in the gardens here, though in themselves they are very imperfect and possess no features worthy of remark, than I was with that

most perfect monument of Roman art, the Maison Carrée.

The din and dirt of a dense population, the disagreeable sights and sounds of every day life that surround this celebrated temple, quite disturb and disenchant my mind; but when I mounted its steps, which, by the bye, are so steep that they do not give one any great idea of Roman luxury—when I walked round its beautiful portico—then, indeed, I began to wonder how all has been preserved through so many generations; and reflected on the poetic race that built a monument of such surpassing grace and beauty as to inspire admiration and consequent respect in so many races of barbarians, of conquerors and conquered. When I thought of all it had gone through during eighteen centuries of barbarism and neglect, I felt a sort of conviction that the immortal spirit which had created, still continued to hover near its beloved work to preserve it from sacrilege and ruin.

Some such dreamy thoughts as these occupied my mind as I gazed on this beautiful portico. We were then to enter the temple, I know not what my excited imagination did not expect—mystic altars, clouds of incense, processions of

radiant vestals, floated before me; but these bright visions were soon put to flight; they vanished before the dull reality of a modern museum. Though I knew all this before I entered, yet its realization grated against the feelings of the moment, and the many interesting objects the museum contains were lost upon me; even De Laroche's picture of Charles I. and Cromwell did not rouse me from my indifference. This fine representation of the usurper gazing on the coffined body of his murdered king, proved only to me that mankind had not much progressed since the days when the rites of pagan superstition occupied this place.

At the ruined and imperfect temple of Diana there is nothing to disturb the imagination from the contemplation of the mighty past. The only modern innovations are some wild fig-trees and vines that decorate the broken arches, and twine round the sacred altar. Enough remains of the old building, the circular cells where the oracles were delivered, the contrivance for conducting the voice into the statue, and the secret passages, to put one behind the scenes, and shew how the great goddess deluded her votaries. All this reality transports the mind direct into the olden

time—beautiful priestesses and admiring adorers stand before us in vivid distinctness; and we wonder what degree of faith they placed in a religion to whose mysteries they were privy, and whether those kneeling warriors adored with more fervour the marble statue of the goddess, or its fair attendants.

The baths, too, are full of interest, though a good deal spoilt by the modern superstructure of Louis XIV., in which some cross-legged Cupids and plump ladies, in affectedly strained attitudes, seem marvellously misplaced. Still, on descending to them, one steps with delight on the identical pavement, and wanders with pleasure through the very recesses where Roman beauty indulged in one of its highest gratifications. The feelings and thoughts thus produced take one out of self, with all its aches and cares, and constitute the great pleasure of travelling. What we want is, to be embodied, as it were, in the thing we admire. We look (though many without knowing it) for impressions—vivid and pleasant impressions—that may make us forget the present, and give us for the moment a new and far pleasanter sort of existence; therefore, however beautiful an object may be, if its situation or other

unharmonious causes prevent it from producing this impression, its effect is lost.

The amphitheatre, so well described by Reboul, and so magnificent in itself, is, I think, spoilt from being too "trimly dressed." No trees nor wild shrubs are allowed to appear, or encircle with their fond arms its ancient remains; and thus, though infinitely more perfect, it did not please me near so much as the mouldering walls and ruined arches of that at Poitiers. But, after all, I must confess the fault was in me rather than the building, for as an architectural specimen the amphitheatre is better as it now is; and how could the interior of the Maison Carrée be more properly made use of than as a museum for the remains of ancient art and modern painting?

I felt sure we should find good bread at Nismes, because its beautiful poet is a baker, and strange to say, we have not been disappointed, though M—— maintained that a good poet was likely to be a bad baker. Nowhere in the south of France have we met with such excellent bread, and after regaling on it at our comfortable tea (making a regular meal of tea is a luxury that falls to the lot of few mortals except washerwomen and maid-servants), we walked to see the celebrated poet.

We found him just sitting down in his shop to his evening meal, and he bore the interruption of a visit from persons he had never seen or heard of before, with considerable good humour. Yet I think this sort of interruption to persons who are obliged to labour for their daily bread, and whose short moment of repose is thus interfered with, must be indeed a great trial of temper. Reboul has a fine intellectual countenance and an air of greater refinement than seems to belong to his short tradesman's jacket. His dark, speaking eyes are surmounted by thick and arched eye-brows. A profusion of greyish hair grows rather low down upon his forehead. A sweet and benevolent expression plays about his mouth, and dimples the pale cheeks, which are rather sunk. He is well acquainted with Italian, and is now learning English, with the hope of being soon able to read Milton in the original tongue. He admires the "Paradise Lost" extremely, and says the style seems to him to resemble that of the old Italian poets. "But," said he, "it is very hard to judge, for in a translation, one is always derrière la tapisserie." He does not admire Shakspeare so much as his own Corneille; our great bard's mixture of tragic and comic scenes in the same piece, does not suit his taste.

After dinner we again walked in the gardens: a fine flight of steps leads to the terrace, which commands a good view, and from whence shady walks conduct to the Tourmagne,

"La tour qui s'élance aux célestes campagnes
Dont le hardi sommet est voisin des éclairs."

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It stands on a considerable elevation, and was originally about ninety-five feet high; it has now about three-quarters of its former height. Some antiquarians give it a great antiquity. Perrot concludes, from a piece of money, with the heads of Augustus and Agrippa, and the Crocodile on the reverse (the colonial medal of Nismes), that it cannot have a date before that time, and that it served for a watch tower; others think it was a mausoleum. It was an octagon building, and conical in form.

Good ladders have been placed inside, by which the approach to the top is made easy and secure. The view is very extensive, commanding, in fine weather, the distant mountains, the Alps, Mont Blanc, &c. It was interesting to trace the circuit of the walls of the old town, which was of great extent. The tower is a great mass of building; its most determined enemy was Charles Martel,

who nearly destroyed it, because it had been fortified by the Saracens; but Francis Trancat was a second Martel, as he received permission from Henry IV. to make excavations, in the expectation of finding treasure.

We were up this morning at a quarter past four. The drums of a regiment assembling to march awoke us, so we went out to have another look at the great monuments before our departure. Again mounted to the top of the amphitheatre, and measured one of the upper stones, which has the projection to receive one of the poles of the velaria, and found it more than seven feet long.

We saw the ornaments of the north entrance, and bought, as a memorial, a Roman coin of Nismes, a 'Col Nem,' with the Crocodile. We also went again to the Maison Carrée, and saw how unfair it is to judge of the effect of this building from its present state. It now looks bare without a peristyle, and the pilasters are poor; but we should recollect that it was built to stand in the centre of a fine forum, with a colonnade, above which the temple was raised. If it had a complete portico, the effect might have been heavy, particularly as behind, it was separated from the forum by a distance

of only twelve feet. We again walked round it, and in the museum, and having bought a few medals, hurried home to breakfast.

We have been reading lately many of the French Modern Poets, and are much pleased with some by St. Beuve, Milvoie, and Reboul. I find many English people have a great prejudice against modern French poetry. Yet, surely there is much beauty in it, particularly in the writings of De Lamartines and Victor Hugo. Indeed, I believe they have the same prejudice against English poetry of the present day; and this feeling is, perhaps, something analogous to that which induces the relations and intimate friends of an author at first to despise his writings. The writers of past centuries are removed far from all our jealous or envious feelings, and we also naturally and justly venerate what is old:

"Each goodly sign and mystic letter,
That angel-haunted books unfold,
We cherish more,—we know them better,
When we remember they are old;
And friends, though fresh, and hale, and cheerly,
And young, as annals hold,
Yet, if we prize them very dearly,
We love to call them old."

MILNES.

On the other hand, when this prejudice is once overcome, I believe modern books are the more interesting and amusing; and this arises not so much from their novelty, as because they are written to suit the taste of the age. The most popular writers are those who have discovered soonest any change in the public feeling, and written for it. These have all the benefit of apparent originality; they may not have found out a new path, but they have been the first to follow or accompany mankind on the new road.

Sometimes, indeed, the quick sight of a great genius sees beyond the present generation, and discovers the direction in which the human mind is going to travel, and precedes it in its course. He writes for this coming taste, and then it generally happens that his writings are not appreciated by his cotemporaries. And the higher the genius, the more likely is this to happen, because it sees the farthest, and is more quickly influenced by those often-hidden causes which impel our nature towards improvement.

CHAPTER XXII.

Pont du Garde—Avignon—Its good Hotel and interesting Antiquities.

Avignon, October 8th.—We started at half-past nine from Nismes, and at the second relais, Lafoux, where there is a suspension bridge over the Garde, turned off the road, to visit the Pont du Garde, a detour, as charged, of nine kilometres. The Pont du Garde—

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"L'aqueduc qui nivelle et qui joint deux montagnes,
Et qui porte l'onde dans les airs"—

was originally an aqueduct for conveying the waters of two streams, near Uzes, to Nismes. This aqueduct, upwards of twenty-two miles long, was a splendid and useful work, for which the inhabitants of Nismes were indebted to Agrippa.

The River Garde here passes between rocks of some elevation, and about eight hundred feet distant from each other; and to carry the aqueduct across was the object. For this purpose three rows of arches were constructed; the lowest row consists of six arches and the second of eleven; which are so contrived, that five of them correspond with five of the first range, and thus have the same support; the third row has thirty-five arches, but they are only about eight feet high, and on them the aqueduct is placed. It is about four feet wide, and five high; the height of the entire is about a hundred and forty-six feet, and the length of the aqueduct eight hundred and nineteen. The effect from the bottom is very fine, but I should call it inferior to the aqueduct of Casserta. This is, however, a noble work; and, viewed from either side, but I think, particularly from the left bank of the river, very picturesque. The top of the aqueduct is covered with rough stones, of a single piece; we walked across it, though in some places the covering has given way. A good flight of steps makes the approach, on the northern side, easy.

The modern bridge has been cleverly constructed. It is formed by increasing the breadth

of the six lower arches so much, as to allow of a carriage road; it is then exactly of the same dimensions as the principal range of the aqueduct—is consequently a fine work, and I do not see why it should have excited the contempt of some tourists. The states of Languedoc decided, after much deliberation, on this method of making the communication across the river, and it appears they could not have done better.

We found an encampment of gipsies here,—the first I happen to have seen in France. Much wild lavender and other sweet-smelling herbs grow among the rocks, on the east side of the river. It now flows quietly under one arch only, but the extended bed shews that it can be in a passion. The fresh leaves of the mulberry-trees —their second crop—have a most refreshing effect, after those dusty green olives and withered vines, so long our companions.

We gradually ascended before we reached Avignon, and the first view we obtained of the majestic Rhone and the picturesque Avignon, in its fine position above the river, and of the rich, undulating vale rising into rugged heights at the horizon, is one of the loveliest I have seen. We saw it indeed to advantage; the river, sparkling

in sunshine, could be traced far away in its broad course towards the sea, occasionally overflowing into wide lakes. We afterwards found that much of the splendour of this effect was caused by a considerable flood, so much so as to give rise to fears for a repetition of the awful scenes of last year.

The old town wall of Avignon,with its towers, and the imposing, though irregular mass of the Pope's palace, are very striking. The Rhone here appears to me to be vastly wider than any river I have seen. It is divided by an island into two great streams, each of them now of greater breadth than the Rhine at Cologne. The Hotel de l'Europe, situated in the "*place*" close to the bridge, is a very good house, in which we have been fortunate to find excellent rooms.

Before dinner, we took a pleasant walk on the rocky height where is the old palace—now, alas ! converted partly into a barrack, and partly into a prison. Higher up stands the cathedral, said to be one of the oldest churches in France, and on the summit of the height, which is quite precipitous on the river side, a promenade is now being constructed, commanding beautiful views on all sides.

The rocky Mount Ventoux is the striking mountain of the range we saw; but I dare say, in clear weather, Mont Blanc is visible. Avignon is the chief town of the department of Vaucluse; it was the Avenio of the Romans, and a celebrated colony; but Perrot says it existed many "centuries" before the Phocians from Marseilles established themselves here in 123. It came into the possession of the counts of Provence, and Joanna of Naples sold it to Clement VI. for eighty thousand gold florins, but there is a doubt if she were ever paid. In 1309 Clement V. transferred the apostolic chair to Avignon. Seven popes resided here until the last, Gregory XI., restored the seat to Rome, in 1378, and the papal legates resided here until the revolution of 1789. Petrarch, who lived under the pontificate of Innocent VI., called it "the Babylon of the West."

October 9th.—After breakfast, we took a walk in the Grande Rue, in which are some fine palaces, probably the remains of papal grandeur. The Hotel Calvet is now converted into a Museum for Natural History, and its garden into a botanic one; the collection of curiosities has been removed to the general museum, which we visited

on our return; it is now in confusion, as a new wing is being built.

M. Calvet left to the town not only his museum, but ten thousand francs a-year for the purchase of additions. We took a hurried view of it; among the antique remains I saw nothing of peculiar interest. Two elaborate tombs covered with ornaments, with a ram in the pediment of one, and a bust in the other, are of inferior style but well preserved; they were found at Vaison.

The picture-gallery has one end devoted to the Vernets, who, I believe, were natives of Avignon. Horace Vernet's Mazeppa is here *en double*—the first, intended for Avignon, just as it was finished, received a wound from a foil, during a fencing match; Vernet had it repaired, and sent to Avignon, and painted a *replica* to prevent disappointment; the town kept the two, to prevent any competition hereafter, as to originality. The Museum has a fine library, and collections of medals, bronzes, &c.

We afterwards walked to the Place, to look for maps; but, strange to say, we could not get one of the department maps of Les Bouches du Rhone. Near the "Place" is the "Tour de l'Horloge," a handsome Gothic building. The

theatre has a façade, decorated with columns and statues on the cornice. From it, is a "sweet" communication with the "Place du Chateau:" a rarity in the narrow and dirty streets of Avignon, as my poor nose can testify.

We went into the cathedral, which is undergoing extensive repairs and decorations, almost wholly, as I understood, at the expense of the bishop. The portico is very ancient; a chapel, now under repair, and the cupola, are of the time of Charlemagne; and a large slab, now in pieces, but which is to be restored, is said to have served for Pagan sacrifices. The tomb of Jean XXII. is a fine Gothic monument; but inferior in beauty to many we have in England: it is also to be restored. The tomb of Benoit XII. is the only other papal one the Revolution spared: the figure of the Pope pleased me much.

We again enjoyed the beautiful view from the intended promenade. The interesting old town of Villeneuve les Avignon looks very well on a height, at the opposite side of the river, now greatly swollen. Above Villeneuve are the extensive ruins of the Chateau de St. André.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The ivory crucifix at Avignon—Unselfish zeal rewarded.

We started early this morning, our chief object being to see a famous ivory crucifix in the Eglise de la Miséricorde. We went by the quay; the river is still high, and some water remains on the road; a man shewed us the mark left on a house by last year's awful inundation—it reached nearly to the ceiling of the rez-de-chaussée. We saw in our walk more of the wall, which, with its towers, adds so much to the picturesque appearance of Avignon. The wall is now, for the most part, masked at the lower part, with small houses and sheds, and many of the old gates are closed. We had to walk some distance before we came to a gate, and after traversing some narrow and winding streets, reached the church, which was the object of our search.

It belongs, I believe, to a religious society, called "Les Penitents Noirs," is rich in gilding, and has many pictures, said to be good; but it was so dark we could not well see them. Les Sœurs de la Charité—those admirable women—have charge of the church and of the adjoining lunatic asylum. One of them shewed us the crucifix, which is kept under lock and key, in the sacristy. It is finely executed: the figure of our Saviour on the cross is, with the exception of the arms, in one piece of ivory, twenty-six inches long. It is sculptured with great anatomical accuracy: beneath the feet is a death's head, and above, on a scroll, also in ivory, a "superscription is written over him, in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew," "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." In one of the folds of the drapery is the name of the artist, "J. Guillermin, inventit et sculpsit, 1539."

The "sister" who accompanied us, confirmed the anecdote we had heard connected with this crucifix. The story is so interesting, that I think it worth relating. In order to understand it, I must ask you to transport yourself, in imagination, so far back as the sixteenth century, and place yourself in a homely but pic-

turesque room, with an oriel window that looks upon a little garden near the western rampart. In this room, an old man is carving a Madonna in ivory, whilst his nephew, a handsome youth of nineteen, is near him, occupied with a masterly sketch that promises to become a beautiful picture.

Pierre Guillermin and his nephew were both at work, but the degree of energy bestowed by each on their employment was very different. The uncle, though feeble with age and much bodily infirmity, pursued his task with great vigour, seldom lifting his eyes from the Madonna and child, which were fast increasing in loveliness under his busy fingers,—except that now and then he cast an impatient glance towards the window, as the sun-beams, which first shone upon his work, became higher and higher, and left the figure in comparative darkness. The young man, too, looked impatiently towards the window, but with a very different expression on his speaking countenance,—and, at last, throwing down his brush, he muttered—" I can work no longer."

The old man turned round, and gazed on him with a look of deep sorrow. " Do not lose the last few moments of light," said he, in a gentle, yet half-reproachful tone—" your picture is so

nearly finished, and you are always sure of finding a purchaser, whereas I, alas! often toil in vain, for there are so few who care for sculptured ivory."

"Where is the use of selling all the pictures in the world?" exclaimed the young man. "Nothing can obtain the consent of her parents, they will never give her to a poor artist."

"Say not so, my dear boy!—but how strange it is that an old, worn-out man like me should attempt to teach a handsome youth like you to hope. I have told you again and again it is not to your profession the parents of Elise object. If only 4000 ducats could be obtained, they would gladly consent to the marriage. Oh, if I had your youth, and strength, and talent, the money should not be long wanting!"

"Or I your steady perseverance, dearest uncle!" said Adolph, approaching him with a softened and contrite air. "Fool!—wretch that I am! will nothing conquer this dreadful sloth—this foolish horror I have of being shut up in a close room, when the birds are singing on yonder ramparts, and where——"

"And where you think Elise is taking her evening promenade!—well, well! I cannot blame

you for loving her sweet presence better even than that almost living image of her you have transferred to the canvas. Well, go your ways. I see your heart is on the rampart walk. Go, and leave your old uncle, who is fit for nothing better, to work as long as daylight lasts. Bless thee, my child, and may God grant all your wishes," said the old man, as Adolph, seizing his hat with the energy of a school-boy who has just escaped from an irksome lesson, bounded out of the room. "I should have been the same at his age," thought the old man, as with a sorrowful, yet resigned look, he sat down to his work. "And yet I had hoped his love for that beautiful girl would have given steadiness to his talent." And the old man thought over his nephew's character, till the painful conviction was forced on his mind that he would *not* have acted thus, even at the giddy age of twenty.

"But, then, I was not a genius," added he, as with a look of exultation he gazed on the masterly picture that lay, half-finished, on his nephew's easel. "Besides, I was obliged to labour for my bread—to plod away night and day: whereas, Heaven be praised! my dear sister Marie's child has an old uncle, whose only object is to make

him happy," and the old man continued to work with redoubled vigour. But when the shades of evening began to darken the room, and he felt it was impossible to continue any longer, a more desponding train of thought saddened his mind, and some misgivings came across him as to whether the course of indulgence he had always pursued towards the dear boy a dying sister had confided to his care, was quite right. "If I were to die now," thought he, "the boy would be ruined. I have fostered his taste for splendour, and never denied his slightest wish, because I always saw his talents were so transcendent as to secure to him an independent fortune."

"But, alas! it is not so. I have spent all—all, upon his, perhaps foolish, wishes, and now he has not steadiness to work, and I am growing almost too old. I shall soon be able to do no more for him." And old Guillermin wrung his hands with grief. "And yet, if he were once married, Elise is so good, so sensible, her example, and the pride of being her sole protector, would surely call forth all his energy, and ensure his industry. Oh! if my trade were as lucrative as his!—if I could find a purchaser for this Madonna, as I did for the St. Cecilia, when Adolph

incurred that gambling debt—and my St. Antonio half-finished too! If I could terminate both before the Pope's nuncio passes through Avignon, on his way to Paris, who knows but he might be tempted to give 200 crowns for them; then, with the large figure of our Lord, which I hope to sell for the church of St. Sulpice, the sum would be almost made up. And then—and then!" exclaimed the old man, rubbing his hands, while visions of his nephew's joyous nuptials, and a whole futurity of bliss for the young people, were conjured up in old Guillermin's still sanguine and almost youthful imagination. And he went to rest, determining to be up before daybreak, and work with renewed vigour.

In the meantime, Adolph pursued his way to the promenade, but Elise was not there. In vain he walked up and down, and gazed upon the lovely view, till the forms of the distant mountains became almost blended with the evening sky. She came not. It was getting dark; and, angry with himself and annoyed with her for having caused him to lose the last hour of daylight to no purpose, he resolved to seek Elise, and re-

proach her for having caused him so great a disappointment.

"Something must and shall be decided," muttered Adolph; "it is impossible to exist in this state of uncertainty," he continued, as, with the pettishness of an ill-regulated mind, he reasoned and argued, as many of us do, that if only such and such particular circumstances would but occur, we should never murmur again, and nothing would ever tempt us to sin any more.

Most of us have experienced something of this sort, and though we may have attained the object of our desire, yet we are often wofully disappointed in the salutary influence we expected its attainment would have exercised on our minds. On the other hand, when success has crowned our own steady and persevering exertions, unassisted by any adventitious aid arising from chance, or the partiality or kindness of others, we feel blest in the fulfilment of our wishes; but the satisfaction is not so much in the attainment as in the happy state of mind which is created by a long course of perseverance, and by the daily self-denial of those inmost wishes which must be sacrificed to obtain a great end. The last truth we learn here below is the simple one that all

happiness depends solely upon the state of our own minds, and is totally independent of any outward circumstances.

Certainly the young and thoughtless Adolph had not learned this important truism; for with all the impetuosity of a spoilt and wayward disposition, and with a full conviction he never could be either happy or good unless Elise consented to become his wife, he hurried to her abode, though he had often vowed, when experiencing the cold treatment of her parents, that nothing should ever induce him to approach it again.

He went, but was not admitted.

"So you have wooed the lovely Elise in vain!" said a voice in his ear, as, with a gesture of angry impatience, he turned from her dwelling. "Well, do not look so desponding, there are other fair ones in Avignon. Come, cheer up, and try your luck at play, who knows but Mercury may prove more propitious than Cupid. Come, here are Louis and Charles, and you will just make the fourth."

Adolph hesitated at first, but was soon persuaded to join the party.

"It is all her fault," thought Adolph, or rather, he tried to think so, for there is always an inner voice that tells us the real right and wrong,

however we may try to stifle its admonitions. Adolph felt he was doing wrong in acceding to the tempting proposal of the dissipated young Robert, who had often before led him into scrapes; but he threw all the blame on the adverse fate which, by depriving him of Elise, seemed to extinguish every virtuous feeling. He played, and gained at first; he then lost a little, but instead of desisting, he continued to play, and the dawn of day found him still at the table.

At last he returned home, after having lost a considerable sum; and, far too tired to make use of the now bright daylight in his studio, he threw himself on his bed, and sank into a troubled and feverish sleep.

Long before Adolph had returned home, old Guillermin was at his work, happily unconscious of the manner in which his nephew had passed the night. It is astonishing what a strong will, what a powerful, and above all, a noble motive, can effect. The ardent desire to see his dear nephew happily married, seemed to instil fresh vigour into the old man's arm, and never, in his young days, did he achieve such a triumph as his beautiful group of the Madonna and child.

But the masterly sketches which surrounded the room were neglected. Adolph worked but feebly, and seemed possessed by a sullen and desponding melancholy. "The poor boy is pining," thought his kind uncle; and as the young man's efforts became more feeble, those of Guillermin redoubled; and yet, a few days before the expected arrival of the Pope's legate, old Guillermin's strength seemed suddenly to fail. His anxiety had been so great, that he allowed himself scarcely any time for rest, but had toiled through several nights by candle light, much to the injury of his valuable sight.

Adolph, though he could not fail to see that his dear uncle was fast sinking under his excessive labour, was so absorbed in his own sullen and helpless grief that he took no notice of all these exertions. Such occurrences are not rare. A mother, a devoted wife, or child, may consume their days in efforts for the advantage of a beloved object, and the indifference, or even ingratitude of that adored being does not diminish either their efforts or affection, and then these zealous and unselfish efforts are generally blessed —at all events, the one who loves finds in this strong affection a reward.

"To those who *feel* the power is given
This sign of mystery to scan,
And draw down from the stars of heaven
A lesson for the heart of man,
That it should cherish in all grief
Its own affections as relief."*

Even the most unworthy in this world have some one who cares for them; and if all human sympathy should fail, still our Heavenly Father never tires, and never ceases in his efforts to draw us towards good. He does so sometimes by affliction, sometimes by prosperity; but, alas! like poor Adolph, we refuse to listen to his call; we refuse even to help ourselves, and perversely act in the way least conducive to our happiness in this world or the next. "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have rest," may be said to almost all of us happiness-seeking yet most perverse mortals.

The old man's strength failed, but he prayed fervently that he might be the means of happiness to his beloved nephew. In spite of his exertions, when the legate arrived, his works were not finished. Determined, however, to make an effort to interest the powerful man in

* Sir Francis Doyle.

his behalf, he contrived, by means of a friend, that his designs should be shewed to him. Fortunately the legate was so much pleased with them, that he gave an order, not only for the Madonna and the Holy Family, but for several other things, to decorate a new church he was building at Florence.

The old man's desires were now fully accomplished; his mind once at rest, he was able to work with renewed vigour, and in a few months his labours were ended—he received more than the wished for 4000 ducats.

He had kept all this a secret from his nephew, and now he went with his treasure to the parents of Elise, and demanded her in marriage for his nephew, as the young man's independence was thus secured. They joyfully consented. The young people were married, and the happiness of all parties was complete.

Adolph was one of those who seem at first sight to thrive in prosperity, and who appear to require the stimulant of success in order to develop their energies. This is often the case with what are termed spoilt children, who, so long as all goes on right, and they meet with nothing to thwart their inclinations, act well and vir-

tuously. From the moment he obtained Elise, nothing could be more steady and industrious than Adolph. He was indefatigable in his studio, and, touched to the heart by the generous devotion of his uncle, he toiled assiduously, not only to reimburse all that the old man had expended, but to ensure for him a handsome independence for the rest of his life.

We may ask, why should such a character be ever afflicted, when prosperity thus fosters its good qualities? If we read the book of Job, the reason will be obvious.

The young people continued to live with their uncle, and during the first year of their marriage nothing could exceed the happiness of them all; and this was crowned by the birth of a child, which the affectionate old man adored, if possible, more than he had ever loved any human being.

Guillermin now only worked occasionally. His model was generally the young child of his nephew. The infant, with its lovely mother, formed a charming group for a Madonna and Child; and many are the altar-pieces, both in painting and carving, in which their beauty has been immortalized. Thus passed two happy

years ; and the old man had quite given up any fears on his nephew's account.

About this time a young artist from Florence came to Avignon, whose genius soon procured him abundant employment. Adolph had hitherto been considered the best painter in Avignon, but now many preferred the pictures of the young Florentine—an opinion which Adolph himself felt was not without foundation. Not wishing, however, to shew that he felt any jealousy of his successful rival, he cultivated the acquaintance of the Florentine, and they became apparently inseparable friends. Often did they paint together in the same studio, and Elise and her lovely babe were frequently the subjects of the stranger's pencil.

Old Guillermin did not quite approve of this great intimacy, for there was something in young Valentino's countenance which seemed to belie his actions. However, not liking to instil any doubts into his nephew's apparently ingenuous heart, he said nothing to him, though, with great gentleness, he cautioned Elise not to encourage the frequent visits of her husband's friend. The young wife received this caution with evident embarrassment, and the old man began to

tremble, lest the handsome stranger had made too great an impression on her heart.

Soon afterwards, Adolph went to Toulouse to receive an order for the altar-piece of its fine cathedral, and during his absence, the old man was glad to find that Elise did not receive the visits of Valentino. Under the plea of illness, she shut herself up with her baby, and old Guillermin felt quite re-assured. But, as the old poet, Sir John Harington, quaintly says—

> "Against bad tongues, goodness cannot defend her;
> Those be most free from faults, they least will spare;
> But prate of them whom they have scantly known,
> Judging their humours to be like their own."

In the mean time, Adolph was receiving splendid orders for pictures at Toulouse. He met there the young Robert, whom he had formerly called his evil genius, and who, a disappointed suitor of Elise, had left Avignon shortly after Adolph's marriage. Robert met him with great cordiality, but there was a sinister expression on his countenance which almost made Adolph tremble.

"So, you are a happy husband, and father, too, and become quite a steady man! Happy in your wife, and in your wife's friend, too, I hear."

"My wife's friend! What do you mean?"

"Yes, your wife's friend. Do you think it is for your beaux yeux that Valentino visits your house so often? Have we not got her as a Madonna, painted by him, in our church of St. Stephen? and is not their love the talk of all Avignon?"

Adolph was thunderstruck. His jealousy thus excited, a thousand recollections darted into his mind to confirm his suspicions. There could be no doubt—and a sudden conviction that Elise was guilty seemed to stifle reason and depress every power. And yet Adolph had no opinion of Robert. Why, then, was his mind so suddenly poisoned against his wife and friend? Because passion blinded his better judgment, and his old perverseness of heart returned. Without waiting to finish the orders he had received, he started that very night for Avignon; and his feelings may be read in some fine lines of Massinger's:—

> "What a bridge
> Of glass I walk upon, over a river
> Of certain ruin, mine own weighty fears
> Cracking what should support me,
> Ravish'd by doubts and wilful jealousy."

Yet many persons maintain that there can be no love without jealousy. Massinger was not of this opinion; for he says—

> " Will you then confirm
> That love and jealousy, though of different natures,
> Must of necessity be twins—the younger
> Created only to defeat the elder,
> And spoil him of his birthright? 'Tis not well."

It was evening, and old Guillermin had embraced his darling child and its mother, and retired to rest. Elise had just placed her babe in its cradle, and was preparing to go to bed, when she was startled by a rustling of the vine-leaves at her window. On approaching it, she saw a man's head, and was about to alarm the house, when a well-known voice implored her to be silent. " Only listen to me for one moment, and I will never molest you again; but," continued Valentino, in a menacing air, as he bounded into the room, " if you alarm the house, be assured, your fair fame will be lost!"

Elise felt the whole danger of her situation. She had long been aware of his love; and hence her embarrassment when the old man mentioned

his fears; but, aware of her husband's jealous disposition, and entering fully into the motives which induced him to cultivate the intimacy of a rival artist, she had forborne to mention the painful subject, and only endeavoured to repress, in every possible way, the secret advances of Valentino.

She now earnestly implored him to begone.

"Only say that you do not detest me!" he exclaimed—"Only say that in time you may look favourably on me, and I will trouble you no more!"

At this moment, a noise was heard on the stairs—"Fly! it is my husband!" exclaimed Elise. Valentino hurried to the window, but before he could reach it, the door was forcibly broken open, and Adolph rushed into the room. "Where is he?—where is the traitor? I knew I should find him here!" he exclaimed, brandishing a dagger. So saying, he rushed upon the unfortunate Valentino, and in another moment the dagger had pierced his breast! "Perish, traitor!—you, too, faithless wife, shall die!" he said, rushing towards her. Poor Elise sunk senseless on the ground, where she lay unconscious of all that then passed.

Old Guillermin had been awakened by the noise, and running down stairs, he found his nephew bending over the dying artist, and listening to the faint words he tried to utter.

"She is innocent!" said Valentino; "with my dying breath I call God to witness that she is so. The fault was all my own; forgive me, my friend, and suspect not your spotless wife." These were his last words, uttered so earnestly as to convince Adolph of their truth. He eagerly ran to implore the forgiveness of Elise for his unjust suspicions.

Valentino died; the report of the murder was soon noised abroad, and the officers of justice seized their unresisting victim, and conveyed him, heavily ironed, to the dismal dungeons beneath the papal palace. Adolph was tried, and condemned to death.

The young artist was sentenced to be cut off in the flower of his youth—in the midst of all his lately attained, but long wished for bliss. The agonized wife, the heart-broken uncle, threw themselves at the feet of the judges in vain. There had been so many murders committed in Avignon, by persons of even the highest rank,

and so little was this crime regarded, that the government was determined to act with rigour, and it was finally resolved to make an example of the unfortunate Adolph. In vain his uncle urged that the crime was unpremeditated—that a sudden paroxysm of jealousy, under circumstances which indeed were enough to awaken it, had led to the fearful catastrophe. The government was inexorable, and the morning of the 15th September was fixed for Adolph's execution.

Old Guillermin was now completely heart-broken; after a last effort to touch the hearts of those in authority, he returned home, and shut himself up in his studio—that room where he had so often worked by the side of his dear nephew—that room in which he had so often sought for consolation, and never yet in vain; whatever wishes he had formed whilst engaged with his work had in time been fulfilled. He mechanically took up a crucifix which had occupied him for some time, and as he began, almost unconsciously, to use his chisel, the old feeling of hope, which was so connected with that employment, returned to his mind. At first it was vague, and merely the effect of pleasing association; but it

gradually assumed a more tangible shape, and it occurred to him that the "Penitents noirs" were in possession of a bull from the Pope, which gave them the power of asking on their festival the pardon of a criminal; but the poor sculptor was unacquainted with the confrérie; and how was he to ingratiate himself so as to interest them in his favour?

He now looked with rapture at the crucifixion, upon which he had already bestowed so much labour, and on it he built his hopes; but here another difficulty presented itself—the work was not finished, and the day of the festival was near at hand. Oh! what would he not have given for even one of the precious days he had lost in fruitless entreaty?

But this shadow of hope had no sooner dawned on the old man's mind than he set to work, and never, even in the brilliant days of youth, did he labour with greater assiduity, for now he toiled for his dear nephew's life, whose adoring wife and lovely child smiled encouragingly on his efforts. Old Guillermin worked day and night, and on the eve of the festival presented himself at the convent gate with his crucifix.

The gift was joyfully accepted, and the next day he had the happiness to embrace his pardoned nephew.

Those who have had the patience to read the above moralizing story, may well imagine with what interest we looked on the ivory crucifix, upon which the lives and happiness of so many beings had depended.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The old Bridge at Avignon—Good effects of a Dream—Orange: its fine Roman Theatre, and Triumphal Arch—L'Isle—Vaucluse.

Avignon, Hotel de l'Europe, October 11.—A friend of mine said, when she heard we were coming here, that I should have much pleasure in seeing Avignon, because I had described it as the scene of poor Queen Joanna of Naples' trial, which took place here in the fourteenth century. I expected, however, much less enjoyment in seeing the actual place than I found in writing about it, and fancied the old town of my imagination would have proved far more beautiful than the real one. But I am agreeably disappointed.

After dinner, we hurried to the bridge, to enjoy the sunset from the island which divides the river. The view was very beautiful. The old

wall, the Tour de l'Horloge, the misshapen yet imposing mass which composed the palace of the popes, the tower of the cathedral, the crowning height, the curious telegraph, the magnificent river, the remains of the old bridge, with its little chapel, all contributed to the beauty of the landscape.

The old bridge is said to have owed its existence to a dream. A shepherd, named Bénézet, asserted to the Bishop and inhabitants of Avignon, that, while tending his flock on the opposite side where Villeneuve des Avignons now stands, he was directed in a dream to build a bridge across the river, to facilitate the approach of pilgrims to the city.

He succeeded in persuading them of the reality of his mission; and, in 1178, the bridge was begun. Its construction was favoured by Raymond, fifth Count of Toulouse. A convent to receive the pilgrims was built at the Avignon extremity of the bridge, and Benézét established in it a religious administration of Ponts et Chaussées, they were called "Pontifes," or "Frères du Pont," and obtained great privileges, but were afterwards suppressed. Bénézet, now a saint, was in 1184 buried in the little chapel on the bridge.

We are now come to the beaten track of English travellers, as is shewn by the much greater civility of the innkeepers, and their anxiety to please. On the other side of Montpellier they never appeared glad to see the arrival of an English family. The fact is, that English travellers usually give a great deal more trouble, particularly in places not much frequented by them, where arrangements are not yet made for the supply of hot water, and the numerous other luxuries which Englishmen require.

Here we are obliged to pay dearer for our superior accommodation, and very justly too. Instead of grumbling at the price we have to pay for English luxuries, we ought, indeed, to be very thankful to those foreign innkeepers who give us the enjoyment of them. In my suffering state, this excellent hotel, with its warm rooms, luxurious chairs, and numerous comforts, is quite, as the French say, "impayable."

Our apartment contains the first carpet we have trod on since we left Paris, and there are some old sofas and chairs which I fancy may have been used by the unfortunate Queen Joanna, or Petrarch's Laura—they look so grand and venerable.

Yesterday, we resolved, as it would save time, now so precious to us, to visit Orange, as by doing so we may see Vaucluse on Monday, sleep at L'Isle, and so proceed to Aix on Tuesday, without returning to Avignon. Our plans, however, were destined to be frustrated!

The wind was high and sharp, which made the drive disagreeable; it was long and tedious too, —Orange being twenty-eight kilometres, seventeen miles, from Avignon. The road, not very good, is flat and uninteresting; but the ruins are well worthy a visit. Orange was the ancient Aransion or Ansion, spoken of by Strabo, and became a Roman colony under Nero. At Roquemaure, not far from Orange, on the opposite side of the Rhone, Hannibal effected the passage of the river.

The first Count d'Orange was Girard d'Odlemard, who lived at the beginning of the eleventh century; a Princess Tiburga beautified the town in 1140, and in 1393, the principality passed into the house of Nassau. Prince Maurice fortified Orange, and probably built the castle, the ruins of which are on the height above the theatre. William III. of England, dying without children, the principality came to Fre-

derick William, King of Prussia, who, in 1713, by the treaty of Utrecht, ceded it to France.

We first went to the theatre, the façade of which is extraordinarily perfect. Perrot gives its dimensions, 107 feet high, and 316 long. There is a large square door in the centre, and nine arches on each side, formed by pilasters of the Doric order. The pilasters of the large entrance are higher, and have Corinthian capitals of white marble: these pilasters support an entablature, over which, for a considerable height, the wall is bare. It is supposed that a large portico went along this wall, supported by columns in front, and the traces of ruins seem to support this idea. Above, are twenty-one false arches with round openings, intended to give air to the corridors within; then comes a cornice, in which are large projecting stones, perforated with holes, and corresponding with similar projections in the cornice that terminates the height. These are supposed to have been destined for the poles which supported the velaria, or awnings, to protect the theatre from the sun and rain.

The architect took advantage of the slope of the hill to form the seats for the spectators, and by this means much labour was saved. The lines

of the lower seats are defined by some remains—the upper seats are quite destroyed; heaps of rubbish remain, full of large holes—passages, probably, when the ruins were crowded with modern dwellings: for, like the Amphitheatre at Nismes, they were once thickly inhabited; an abuse, however, which no longer exists; and, as the attention of government is now awakened, the building will sustain no further injury.

The stage was most solidly built of large blocks, and is tolerably preserved: it was decorated with columns of fine marble. Fragments of rosso antico, giallo antico, granite, &c., have been found in abundance, and are kept in an adjoining room, but the pieces are so small, as to shew that the work of destruction was effectually done.

At each side of the stage are two buildings, of a very massive construction; they contained large rooms, and the staircase of one is perfect: in some instances two steps are formed out of one stone. We partly ascended one, still full of rubbish, the masonry of which is very fine, and in my opinion would announce a better period of art than that usually given as the date of this building—the reign of Constantine. The quantity of ashes, and the blackened walls, shew

that the destruction of this interesting monument was effected by fire. The furious zeal of a Christian bishop, excited the people to commit this barbarous act.

On our way to the Triumphal Arch, we passed by one of the arches of the Hippodrome, which was of great extent. The Triumphal Arch has suffered much, and one of the side arches has been almost entirely restored: the preservation, therefore, of the rosaces in the ceiling of the principal arch is the more remarkable.

The height is said to be about sixty-five English feet: it consists of three arcades, of which the centre is much the largest; four Corinthian pillars on each façade, placed on projecting pedestals, support the entablature; the whole is richly ornamented, but has greatly suffered. On the front of the platform, above the great arch, on both sides, are spirited bas-reliefs, representing a battle—some of the combatants on horseback, some represent barbarians half naked, with large shields. The bas-reliefs above the smaller arches represent military and naval trophies, standards, shields, &c.; on the shields are some letters, supposed to be the names of the Gallic chiefs. The coil of ropes, masts, &c.,

among the naval attributes, are very well executed. Religious attributes are the subject of one relief. On the eastern side are figures of captives with their hands tied behind them.

Antiquarians have differed as to the date of this monument. Some attribute it to the period of Marcus Aurelius's victories, others to the victory of Marius over the Cimbri, which took place near Aix; but Perrot ascribes it to the time of Domitius Œnobarbus, who, after his victory, mounted on an elephant, made a triumphal march through Gaul, along the Via Domitia, (so called from him); and as the inhabitants of Orange were his allies, it seems not unlikely that they, as well as those of Cavaillon and Carpentras, erected triumphal arches on the occasion.

The drive home was less uncomfortable, as the wind was in our backs; but I believe I am indebted to this long expedition for the bad cold with which I have since suffered.

L'Isle, Tuesday. — At a very uncomfortable inn, but I am so ill that every place must appear wretched.

The first part of the drive is without interest; but from the height before we reached L'Isle, the

view of the Comptat, thickly studded with houses and villages, the Chateau of St. André above Villeneuve, and Avignon, with its conspicuous buildings, is very rich.

We first drove to the hotel with a promising title—that of "Petrarque et Laure;" which does, however, no credit to its patrons, so we returned to (the "Poste") L'Hotel St. Martin, and found it better, though far from good. I intended to have gone on to Vaucluse; but felt too ill to proceed; so W—— went alone. He says—

"I started, in an old lumbering gig, for Vaucluse. The post-master himself drove me—not wishing, as he said, 'me fier à ces jeunes gens,' and fortunately for me he had these scruples, as I found him a very intelligent, obliging old fellow. Nothing could be more uninteresting than the drive, and therefore the romantic beauty, I may say grandeur, of Vaucluse is the more striking; but the country, though most destitute of beauty, is rich in other respects—mulberry trees and garance its chief productions.

"My guide asserts that the climate is getting too cold for olives, which now frequently fail. Garance, which produces a beautiful red dye, is the great crop: the root is the part made use of;

and must be three years old to be fit for use; it is grown in trenches, and earthed every year. When the garance is to be pulled, the labourers earn three and a half or four francs a-day—ordinary price, thirty-five sous. At Orgon there is a fine garance-mill, where the root is pulverized for sale: it is conducted by an Englishman. The pantaloons of the French army are all of this colour.

"I obtained from my worthy 'Maître de Poste' some information about the management of the silkworm. I find that an ounce of eggs, called here, 'grain,' will produce about a quintal, rather more than a hundred weight of cocoons, and these about ten pounds of silk. The worms produced by an ounce of 'grain' will consume from twenty-eight to thirty quintals, about a tun and a half of mulberry leaves. The hatching is effected by exposing the 'grain' to a moderate degree of heat; the poor do so, by placing them in their beds, and, to keep up the required heat, one of the family always remains in bed until the operation is completed.

"The caterpillars feed for about a month, with three intervals of three or four days, during which they lie in a dormant state. The finest cocoons are

kept for breed; the moth, which is large and heavy, flutters about, but does not fly. The women pair them, and the eggs are laid on pieces of cloth. The mulberry produces two crops of leaves: the young leaves in May are used for the silkworms, the second growth, now collecting, affords excellent food for cattle, particularly young lambs.

"Vaucluse, independent of association, is well worth seeing. Immediately before entering its valley, the country is poor, flat, and, in some places, uncultivated; then the scene suddenly changes, and becomes picturesque; wild rocky heights, broken into fantastic forms, and terminated by a bold and perpendicular mountain. Before reaching the village, we saw a pretty campagne, placed under a projecting rock, belonging to a gentleman of L'Isle.

"The village is a poor place: some mills—one for the manufacture of paper—are placed along the banks of the river, a rapid and clear stream, remarkable for having attained a considerable size within a few hundred yards of its source. The fishing is excellent, my host told me that an Englishman used to come every year to fish—I think he said for so many as ten years; he caught

more than any one, and the boy who attended him, learned his method so well, that he is now the best fisherman of the place: the Englishman has not been seen for some years.

"All traces of Petrarch have disappeared. A house is pointed out, which is said to have been built upon the site of the one he inhabited; it is placed between two others, so the entire scene is changed. A neglected pillar stands in the little 'place' before the inn—on it are the words, 'à Petrarque;' this once stood close to the edge of the fountain, where it was clearly out of place. Inglis attributes its removal to the suggestion of the Duchesse d'Angoulême: my host gave the merit to Lucien Buonaparte, and, to my surprise, quoted the following lines, as written by Lucien, under the influence of which the authorities removed the pillar:—

'Nymphe, sors de ta grotte profonde
Viens, renverser ce monument,
Laure gemit pour son amant,
Tu dois gemir pour ton onde.'

"As Petrarch survived Laura, we must conclude that it was his absence in Italy that Laura lamented, but without giving him the satisfaction of knowing that she did so. Opinion here seems

divided as to the identity of Laura ; there were two individuals of that name, one of Salles, and the other of Baux ; and now I recollect, the tomb of Laura which I visited at Avignon, is in the quarter of the town called Baux—something in favour of the Baux theory. I saw the Castle of Salles, on my way ; not far distant from the road, and, according to my host, well worth a visit ; it still belongs to the Salles family, and the present Marquess, who resides at Paris, is the proprietor. It is in its original state, and rather difficult of access, from the whim of the old steward. The Castle of Salles is said to have been the scene of some great atrocities in former times.

" When we reached the village, we put up at the little inn, and my post-master accompanied me to the fountain, determined himself to be my cicerone. The path is alongside of the river, and not practicable for a carriage ; but it is only a ten minutes' walk. The scenery is very picturesque, the ruins of the old castle, perched on its almost inaccessible position, and the pointed rock, which shoots up like an obelisk, are the striking objects ; but it is altogether very peculiar and interesting. The river is not the least curious

feature—it is a wide and rapid stream; near the road, some springs gush from the rock, of force sufficient to turn a mill.

"When near the fountain, the effect is curious; there is an ascent to reach it, and the river is lost both to sight and hearing altogether; the ascent is alongside of the rocky bed of a waterfall, now quite dry and covered with long, dark moss. The path leads to a perpendicular rock, or rather mountain, and immediately at its base lies the fountain, in a basin of perhaps fifty or sixty feet in circumference. It is now about half full; when low, the grotto may be entered to a considerable distance; and when full—that is, when the water reaches 'the fig-tree,' which grows out of the rock above—it flows over, and forms a fine cascade on the moss-covered bed I have spoken of.

"Just as we got back to the inn, heavy drops began to fall, with all the appearance of continued rain; but, after a lapse of a quarter of an hour, it cleared a little, so we started, and reached home without having had the wetting we expected."

I felt so ill and relaxed from the climate, that we had a long consultation as to the prudence of going on; the result was, a determination,

much to our regret, to give up the plan of passing the winter in Italy, and to go and seek for more bracing air at Paris. We therefore retraced our steps to Avignon, and were fortunate in finding the best rooms vacant—the Duchess Dowager of B—— had left them in the morning, and their quiet was to me a most material advantage.

CHAPTER XXV.

Villeneuve les Avignons—Fine monument of Innocent VI.—Interesting picture of La Marquise de Gange—Her sad history—The tomb of Laura—The Papal palace.

Avignon, Hotel de l' Europe, October 16.—W—— walked this morning to Villeneuve des Avignons; a very blowing day made the limestone dust most annoying. His account is as follows :—

"I passed the fine tower which probably served to defend the old bridge. I can hardly think that its remaining arches are of the age attributed to them (1178); they look like modern work, and yet the old chapel of St. Bénézet seems to confirm their date.

"Villeneuve possesses a fine Gothic monument of Innocent VI. once in the famous Chartreuse, which fell a prey to the Revolution. Its extensive possessions were divided into twenty lots and sold; this monument, being in one of them, re-

mained for years neglected in a barn; but was at last brought to light, and is now placed in the little chapel of the hospital. It is a fine specimen of the ornamental style of the fourteenth century, —very graceful and elaborate.

"The figure of the Pope is represented reposing on the sarcophagus; three highly ornamented arches are on each side; on the pillars which support them are ornamented pedestals, with tabernacled canopies for statues, which are wanting; above the cornice are three niches containing figures; pinnacles of great richness and beauty adorn the summit, which is terminated by three of superior size, and in open work— that of the centre being the tallest.*

" In the refectoire of the Hospice is the picture of the last judgment, attributed to King Réné, which has greatly suffered. I did not see much merit about it; but the portrait of the unfor-

* On the side of the sarcophagus is this inscription :— " Hic jacet Innocentius Papa sixtus. Primus fundator hujus domus qui obiit anno millesimo trecetesimo sexagesimo secundo die vero duodecima mensis Septembris cuius anima in pace requiescat. Amen." And on the other side is an inscription, stating by whom and how the monument was removed and repaired in 1835.

tunate Marquise de Gange is very interesting. The face is extremely pretty—features small and delicate, fine hazel eyes, a countenance expressive of simplicity and good humour, not unlike in character many of the pretty peasants I have seen in and about Avignon. She is dressed in the order of St. Rose, and the costume is not becoming: a white band of linen encircles the face, the rest of the dress is a nun's habit of white cloth. She is represented holding up the front of her dress, in which is lying a bouquet of flowers. The copy of the original, very fairly executed, is at the other end of the room; why taken, I did not discover. This portrait has a sad interest attached to it. The Marquise de Gange, at the age of 13, was married to the Marquis de Castellane, and her beauty procured for her, at the Court of Louis XIV., the title of 'La Belle Provençale.' On the death of her first husband, she married the Marquis de Gange, and came to live with him at Avignon.

"The Marquis had two brothers, one of them an Abbé, who were captivated with the charms of their beautiful sister-in-law; but as she resisted all their solicitations, their love was turned to

bitter hate, and, rendered furious by disappointment, they resolved to destroy her.

"One day, taking advantage of their brother's absence, they entered her apartment with a cup of poison, a sword, and a pistol, and addressing her very politely said, 'Choisissez, Madame ; mais il faut mourir.' The unfortunate victim made choice of the cup, and when they retired, she contrived, by means of a hair, to bring up what she had swallowed. She then got out of the window, hoping by flight to escape from her destroyers ; but in vain, they pursued her, and she fell beneath repeated blows from the dagger of one of the brothers. They were afterwards taken, tried, and convicted, and were broken upon the wheel.

"The castle St. André, once a stronghold of the Popes, is now in ruins. The great towers at the gateway are fine constructions ; one of them is now used occasionally as a prison. I ascended this tower, which contains two rooms of great size. I was warned not to approach one of them—that on the first story ; the floor is covered with straw, full of fleas, no doubt anxiously looking out for the first unfortunate prisoner who may arrive. The view from the top of the tower is

very commanding. I looked into the church at Villeneuve, but saw nothing remarkable."

W—— thus describes a walk, in Avignon, to visit Laura's tomb, and some other sights :

"Under the guidance of the plan of Avignon, which I had studied, I found my way through a number of narrow streets, to that where is the Tombeau de Laure.

"Avignon is an interesting old town to walk through ; sometimes, in a dirty narrow street, a building of considerable size, and of good architecture, the remains of papal grandeur, surprises one. Laura was buried in the church of the convent of the Cordeliers, which was of great extent, and, like so many others, fell a prey to the Revolution of 1789. I think Laura's tomb was at that time destroyed.

"The ground upon which the convent stood has been purchased by a society formed at Avignon, for the education and support of sixty orphans. The children are clothed and instructed either in weaving velvets, or to become smiths, carpenters, or shoemakers ; they are also taught to read, write, and cipher. A very commodious building has been just erected, but is not yet finished ; it contains excellent halls, and a good dormitory,

where every boy has a little recess for his bed. Some monks superintend this very useful and creditable establishment.

"The spot pointed out as the position of Laura's tomb, is in the garden, where a pillar has been erected, surmounted with a cross, and surrounded by some young cypresses. On the pillar is the following inscription, in which the well-known lines of François I. are appropriately introduced:—

"'Quo clarius notescat locus
Tam indigenis quam peregrinis
Ubi requiescat
Laura illa Petrarca amor
Hunc cippum posuit
Carolus Hensall Anglicus
Per Aveniorem iter faciens
Anno Sal. MDCCCXXIII.
Nil amplius addere optimé monent
Nota hæc regii poetæ carmina.

'"Oh, gentille ame étant tant estimeé,
Qui te pourra louer qu'en se taisant?
Car la parole est toujours réprimée,
Quand le sujet surmonte le disant.'

"On the cippus is an ornamental cross in stone, on the upper part of which is a garland, also in stone. It rests on a rough, circular ball, with a

scroll round it, on which are these words:—'Tunc parebit signum filii hominis. Alors paraîtra le signe du fils de l'homme.'

"From the Orphan Asylum, I went to the Military Asylum, a fine establishment, in the style of Les Invalides at Paris; the number of pensioners here is fixed to be at 600. I fancy it now contains more than the number. It seems very well conducted: the pensioners are fed and clothed, and have two francs a month; then they have the privilege of selling a spare loaf of bread, or a bottle of wine. The bed-rooms were clean; on a shelf over each bed is a pasteboard form for a cocked hat, and on it also was each man's goblet, containing his napkin, spoon and fork. At the foot of the bed is a press, where each pensioner keeps his clothes, &c.

"The park is divided into alleys, called after the various battles, and on the walls are inscribed the names of distinguished officers, the history of Napoleon, dates of battles, &c.; but these have suffered much from last year's inundation, and are to be renewed. This building was an old convent of great size. The 'lingerie' is established in the upper part of the dome of the church, now secularized, and is a curiosity for regu-

larity and order. Every week the linen is changed; each man brings his dirty linen to his number, and receives clean in exchange. The commandant is an invalided general; he lodges in a handsome hôtel near the hospital, and has 12,000 francs a year.

"To-day (16th), I again visited the ancient palace of the Popes, or rather that part of it which is now a barrack, and contains I think, 2500 men. The palace was a very large building, constructed at different epochs, but without any uniformity; strength and size appear to have been in view, and architectural beauty not thought of.

"The Salle de l'Inquisition, with the remains of a painting on the wall, representing a curtain with the fleur-de-lis, is shewn: there are openings in the ceiling by means of which secretaries, placed in different rooms, heard and took down the deposition of the accused, who was placed in the room, but saw no one. Through a trap-door, we looked down into the dismal prison beneath, where the prisoners were kept previous to examination; and next room to the "Salle de l'Inquisition" was that of "La Question," the walls incline inwards, and this construction was given—so said our guide—to prevent the cries of the

sufferers from being heard. It is now open to the top; in it are pointed out the place where there were hooks in the wall, with the furnace where the instruments of torture were heated, and outside is a stone trough used for boiling water.

"But I had not yet done with horrors: a place was shewn where stood the hall, in which a Pope's Legate, M. de la Lune, caused 500 citizens of Avignon to be destroyed. He had invited them to a grand entertainment, and whilst all was mirth and jollity, the legate and his followers, on the pretence of being called away for a few moments, withdrew; then, on a signal given, the hall was blown up with gunpowder, and all the unfortunate guests perished.

"Vengeance for the mutilation of his nephew was the cause of this dreadful deed. The young man had insulted some of the citizens' wives, was seized by the people in consequence, and cruelly punished. The legate vowed vengeance, and fearfully obtained it. He escaped, by a communication under the Rhone, to the Castle of St. André, at Villeneuve. The concierge pointed out the entrance to this passage, now walled up; but he asserted that the passage exists, and that

he had himself passed through it—an assertion, I own, I very much doubt.

"The consistory and chapel have been divided into three stories, to lodge the troops. The fine arches still exist in the upper stories, and in the consistory are some good frescoes, in excellent preservation, attributed to Giotto; these are very properly protected by an iron palisade. In a small room, called the Chapel of the Inquisition, are also some frescoes, but not in near so good a state of preservation. In this chapel the prisoners, before they were led to execution, were brought for confession."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Journey to Orange—Valence—Return to Paris.

After W——'s walk to Laura's tomb, we had still time enough for our short drive to Orange, where we had fixed to sleep. Although very ill, I enjoyed our séjour at Avignon. It is interesting in the recollections of its former greatness and interesting in its fallen fortunes. We left the town by the road leading to Vaucluse, and when we passed the turn and took the road to Orange, we then felt, with no small regret, that we had, indeed, turned our backs upon Italy, and all the enjoyment we had expected there.

At Orange, we went to the Triumphal Arch, to examine it more closely. On the western

arcade, which is almost entirely restored, is this inscription :—

"Munificentia
Com. 2 : Prov.
Valclusianœ,
Subsidiis,
MDCCCXXVIII."

We paid a long visit to the theatre, inspected its interesting stage, mounted on the top, and saw, from the marks on the side-walls, that the stage was formerly covered with a roof; but if so, of what use were the perforated projections of the façade? If to hold the poles of the velaria for covering the whole theatre, what was the use of the roofing for the stage? It might be that the façade was protected, but in that case, the idea of a fine portico to hide the naked part of the façade must be given up.

We afterwards ascended the height behind the theatre, where stood the Castle of the Princes of Orange. It must have been extensive and strong, but was totally destroyed by Louis XIV. Huge fragments of masonry are scattered about, and the base of one round tower is standing: the prospect from it is fine, and it is a good position for a general view of the theatre.

If we had the inn without musquitoes and fleas, we should have been very fairly off; but they made a combined attack, with such determination, that they actually drove me from my bed at half-past one, and I was forced, most unwillingly, to sit up the remainder of the night.

From Orange, we passed, by a high bridge, over the River d'Aigues: its large bed, and the mounds on each side, shew that it is sometimes a powerful tributary of the tremendous Rhone. Mornas, the first relais, is built against a rock of curious formation. It forms a high, jagged, and perpendicular wall, and is surmounted by the ruins of a castle.

It once belonged to the Baron des Adrets, who, in the religious war of Louis XIII., amused himself by forcing his catholic prisoners to jump off the rock on the pikes of his soldiers, who were drawn up below. Luckily, the height is so great that the poor wretches must have lost all consciousness before they reached the bottom.

At Palun, the next relais, we might have visited the ruins of the Chateau de Grignan; but a cross-road of four posts was too powerful a competitor for even the recollections of Madame

de Sévigné, and we continued our journey. Soon after leaving Palud, we entered the Department of Drôme, and from Douzères had a montée. Monte Limart is prettily situated on the Roubion, a considerable river, over which is a fine bridge, not far from its junction with the Rhone. Monte Limart (the ancient Acunum) is a good-sized town.

At Valence, we found much more comfortable accommodation than we expected; and, in fact, were very well off at l'Hôtel du Louvre, the 'Poste.' As we had started before seven, from Orange, we arrived early, and had our choice of the rooms.

The position of Valence, on the left bank of the Rhone, is very good. The river, though of much less breadth than at Avignon, is here a noble stream, and consists of but one channel. The Esplanade is a fine walk, commanding a view of the river and suspension bridge, and of St. Peray, famous for its wine, which much resembles Champagne. But the striking object of the view is the ruined Castle of Crêshol, on an almost inaccessible rock on the opposite side of the river, above St. Peray.

We walked afterwards on the bridge, which is

a fine one, and resisted all the fury of last year's inundation. As we stood upon it, the sight of the mighty stream rushing on, and boiling below, was very grand. On our return, we fell in with a proprietaire of St. Peray, who was quite overwhelmed with wonder and delight at having, for the first time, spoken to an Englishman. He told us that a "piece," of the best quality, of St. Peray—containing about twenty dozen—would cost only one hundred francs, under ten sous the bottle—and yet a merchant to whom I spoke charges three francs a bottle; "pour le faire champagniser" is the great expense, as a number of bottles are lost. The fabrication of champagne is here carried on to a considerable extent.

We afterwards visited the cathedral, a very ancient building, of Norman architecture, which contains a monument of Pius VI., who died here in 1799.

The body of the Pope was sent to Rome, but, on a "reclamation," made by Valence, part of his remains were returned to the place where he died.

The monument consists of a bust, by Canova, of excellent workmanship, placed on a pedestal,

on the sides of which are some bas-reliefs, and in front the following inscription :—

"Sancta Pii Sexti redeunt.
Præcordia Gallis.
Roma tenet corpus.
Nomen ubique sonat.
Valentiæ obiit 29 Aug. an. 1799."

We remained at Valence on Sunday, and on the following day proceeded to Lyons; but I will not continue the description of a route so well known. We had a successful journey to Paris, and passed many months there so agreeably as to compensate, in some measure, for the expected pleasures of a winter in Italy.

THE END.

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